

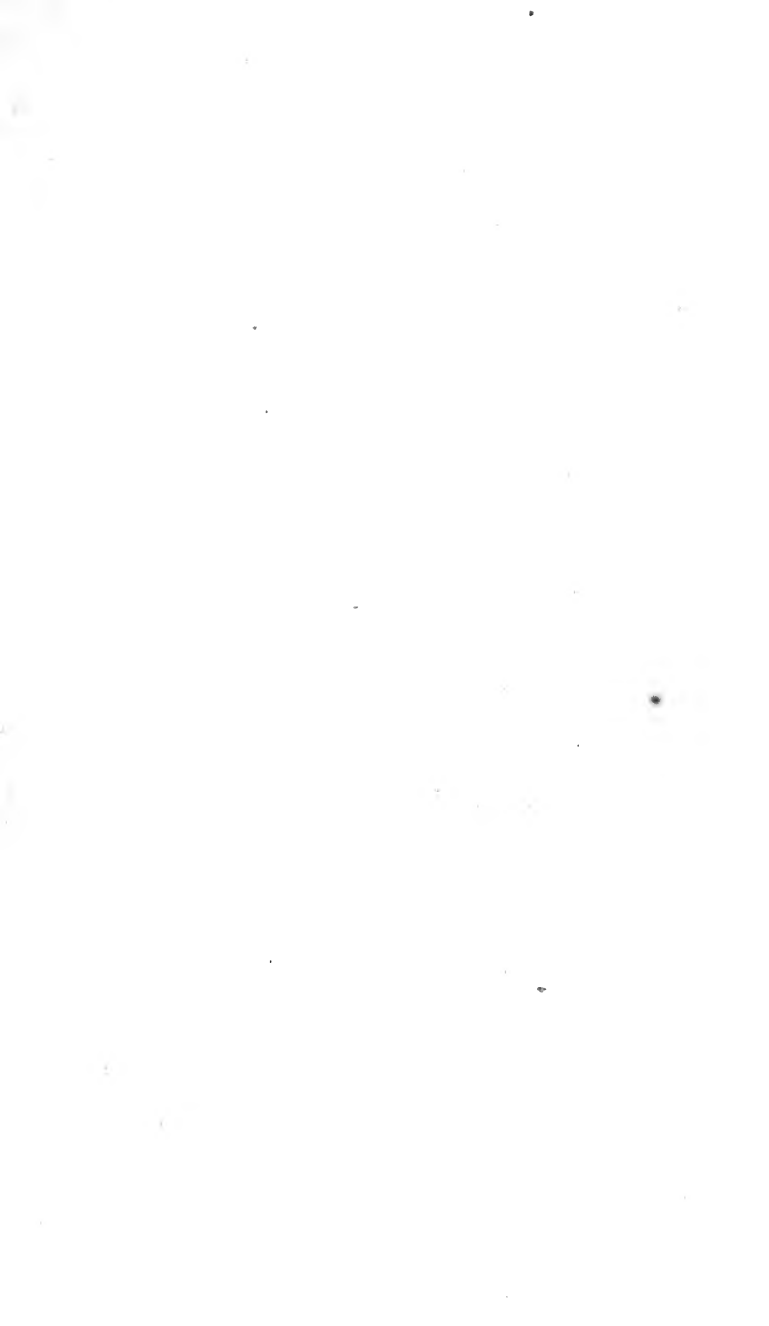
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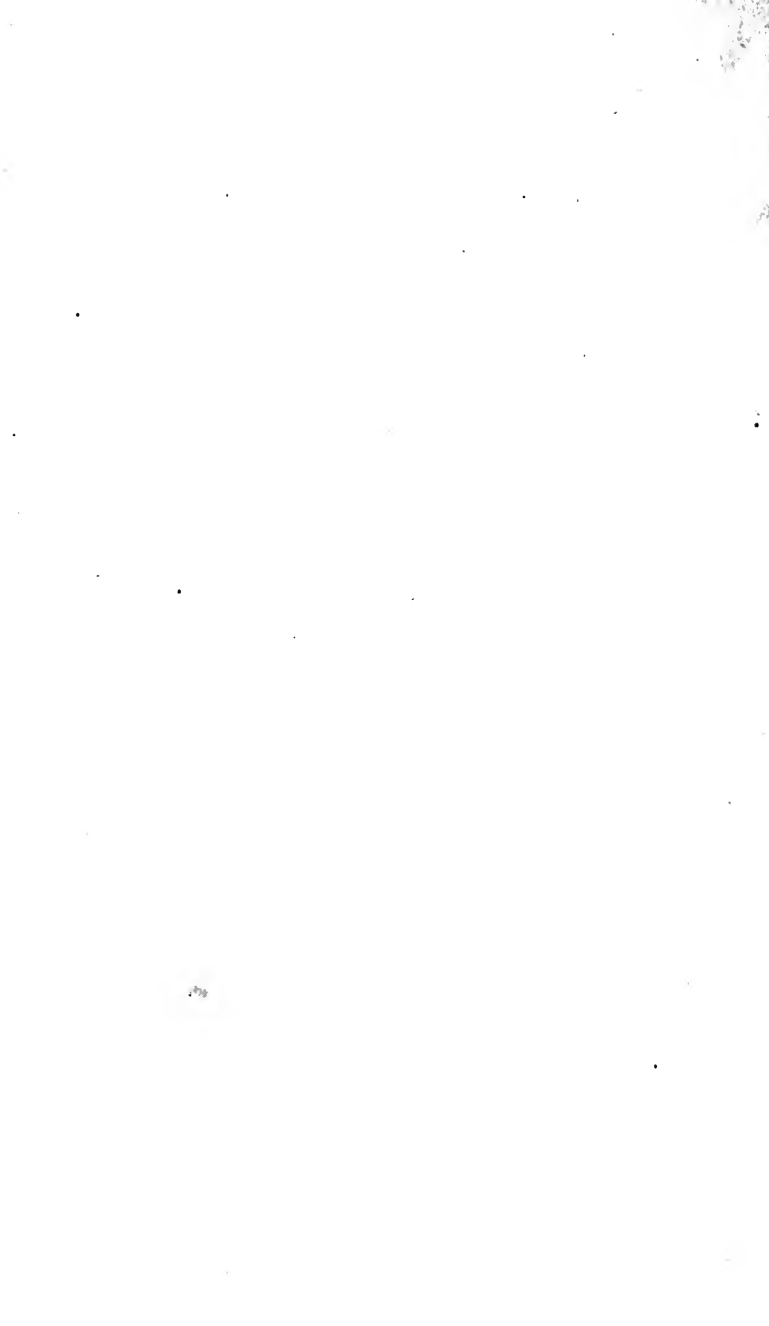
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JOHN AND I.



Interside.

JOHN AND I.

As knightly swords, of polished grain,
Are proven perfect when they bend—
True hearts may swerve, but in the end
Will right themselves and win again.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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JOHN AND I.

CHAPTER I.

It is many and many a year ago—yet how well I remember it!—that journey in the summer morning, through the rosy orchards and green flax-fields of Würtemberg, till we reached its gay little capital, where we stopped; and buying seventy-five plums for a penny, ate them whilst we speculated on what our future might, or might not, be.

My brother John was about the middle

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height, good-natured, good-looking, with a slight tinge of foppishness about him—the effect partly of vanity, and partly that he felt conscious of having deserved a better place in the world than fate had given him; consequently, by trying to impose his gentility on everybody, he in a great measure lost it.

For my own part, I have been equally aware of the patch on my coat, but have never had the presence of mind to put my hat over it. For instance, as we were enjoying our pennyworth of fruit, two pretty, elegant girls approached, and in the twinkling of an eye John's plums were slipped into his pocket, and a pair of lemon-coloured kid gloves were drawn on his hands. I, being admonished by his eyes, made a bungling effort to dispose of mine; but, in doing so,

let them fall down, to the great amusement of the young ladies, and the greater mortification of my brother. Thus it is that, whenever I try to seem at all better than I am, I fail miserably; but somehow John always succeeds. If I had not been standing by his side, he might have passed off then for some wealthy young aristocrat on his way to Switzerland. Unhappily, with my alpaca coat, straw hat and gloveless hands, I spoiled the picture.

“I say, Hendy,” said my brother, “I believe we shall find it uncommonly jolly here—only, old boy, do let me smarten you up a bit. Appearance is nine-tenths of morality all the world over, and you would look much more like a Herr Professor, with a shining black coat and decent hat. It was all very well to dress in that old-fashioned, not to

say slovenly style, when you were an independent bookworm at home ; but now that you are beginning life, as it were, with my reputation and success tacked to yours, it is a very different thing."

Though John was my junior by seven years, he had from our boyhood exercised a sort of authority over me in the minor matters of dress, deportment, *et cetera*. In graver things, in every serious business or emergency of life, I had that perfect control over his judgment which a parent has over his child's; and I rather liked this reciprocity of influence, as it equalized us.

"You are right, John, and we'll see to it," I replied; "we had better now present ourselves to our uncle. He won't want a tutor, you know, so my dress need give me no uneasiness to-day."

“Do you think the old boy will offer us a shake-down and feed whilst we look about us? He could not do less.”

“That’s rather a doubtful question. As he is only our poor mother’s half-brother, and never saw her after she married, and as my experience of uncles in general is not favourable, I should say ‘No,’ John.”

“Well, if everything is as cheap as plums and cigars, it would not be a very great stretch on his generosity. Why, Hendy, one might almost live upon nothing here, and yet save money out of it! Have you noticed what very round faces even the pretty Stuttgard girls have? It’s a pity, as rotundity is vulgarizing—they are uncommonly neat about the waist, though.”

A band of tidy but juvenile soldiers were playing in the square before the king’s

palace, and when we turned into the park, on our way to my uncle's residence, we found the noble centre avenue gay with loungers; whilst in the narrower ones, on either side, carriages, droskies, and horsemen were continually passing. The fragrance of the orange trees, the babbling of the ducks in the cool basin, the merry parties of nursemaids and children among the royal flowerbeds, the contented enjoyment of the green sunshiny place expressed on every face—all this made a pleasant greeting to strangers. It may be womanish on my part, but I have a great prejudice against entering a new place on a rainy day; and perhaps the sunshine on this occasion brought out, in no small degree, the cheerfulness of the scene around us.

We soon reached my uncle's abode; and

having ascended, I don't know how many dozen stone steps, till the nether world seemed sinking below us, at last reached a glass door, having

OBERSTE VON BLUM

painted in red and black letters above it.

A tall lank woman, with a shiny-brown face, long pig-tails hanging down her back, and bearing a large water-tub on her head, motioned us towards an inner room, grinning silently.

It was a large apartment, communicating on either side with another smaller one, the doors of which stood open, and all three had a sort of airy, unfurnished look, which in that season of the year was grateful to the senses. Evidently the centre one was the drawing-room, for there were coloured glass pictures hanging in the windows, a little

bower of wire-work covered with ivy, pots of fig and orange trees, fanciful corner-pieces of worsted embroidery fixed on the walls, some imposing family portraits, and numerous walnut-wood stands of china figures and ornaments. Of the two other rooms we could see nothing but high folding-screens, which were evidently there for the purpose of converting them into sitting-rooms in the day-time. From one of these my uncle immediately came forth and received us with a kindly, old-fashioned courtliness, worthy of the Colonel von Blum. He was a fine old man, about seventy, portly, erect and ruddy, with black hair and mustaches, which I could not help suspecting of dye, wearing a stiff blue neckcloth relieved by a gold brooch, and a tight-fitting surtout, so tight, indeed, that it

must have been made years before, without any allowance for the chances of corpulency—yet it was not shabby.

“My dear nephews,” he said, holding a hand of each, after having kissed us affectionately, “though poor Sophie married an Englishman, and never visited her native country after, I feel that you are of our blood, and bid you hearty welcome. Sit down.”

The mention of my mother, and the meeting with one who had played with her, and loved her, when both were happy little children “in the sweet primrose season of their youth,” had made my smoked spectacles smokier still; but John, who could not remember her much, and who, though of a very passionate, loving nature, was less impressed by bye-gone sorrows than myself,

stroked his mustaches and asked carelessly :—

“I hope my aunt and cousins are well, sir?”

“My wife and youngest daughter Sophie are quite well, and are preparing the dinner, but will have the pleasure of greeting you in half-an-hour’s time; Otilie, the second, is staying with her sister, who is married to the Colonel von Rau, and is residing at Tübingen; Emilie, the eldest, is married to the Councillor Hauf, and lives in this town. They, with their families, are well.”

“That’s a fortunate thing,” rejoined John; “well, uncle, is there any chance of our getting on here? We are preciously short of cash.”

“Your father died in rather reduced circumstances?” said the Colonel, looking

at me in a nervous way; "so your letter said, nephew Henderson."

"My father was one of the unluckiest men in the world," I replied. "He was, as you know, a banker, and as successful and popular as any man in England. Unfortunately he began to speculate, and in these speculations got mixed up with a set of men whom he trusted, but who proved to be the very reverse of honest or prudent. They were ruined, and with them fell, not only the fortunes, but the credit of those who had so blindly hazarded them. My father died almost broken-hearted. He had not the courage to begin life anew, and never forgave himself that he had brought us up to no profession."

"It was mistaken kindness on his part, no doubt. Poor man!" said the Colonel sadly.

“Yes, my father meant it kindly,” answered John, with an unusual seriousness on his face; “but it seems rather hard to us now, uncle, when we have grown up with the idea that we were to be independent, to find ourselves without a profession, or a penny, and with a disgraced name.”

“And what are your plans for the future?” asked my uncle; “have you capital enough to set up a small school? English education is much sought after here.”

John shrugged his shoulders.

“Hendy would make a very good schoolmaster—I should not.”

“And what would you do for?” said my uncle, taking a pinch of snuff, and looking very doubtful whether to smile or not.

“I’m sure I’ve not the least idea. Hendy, what can I do?”

“My brother is master of several languages, and could fill the situation of corresponding clerk in a mercantile house, sir—”

“That I never could, Hendy,” said John in an undertone, and making a grimace as if he had just swallowed a dose of quinine; “the monotony would kill me.”

“He is also an excellent musician,” I continued stolidly, “and a respectable artist.”

“In fact, a sort of universal genius, Uncle Blum, and not over-fond of work. It is of no use to deny the fact. I wish I were a steady-going, learned Dr. Johnson like Henderson—but to every Johnson there must be a Bozzy, and if I was born with a sieve in my head instead of a strong box, I can’t help it.”

My uncle laughed outright, but, seeing that John was really in a serious mood,

patted him on the shoulder and said encouragingly :—

“Your brother, I suspect, is more to be trusted regarding your capabilities. I really think you two young men might do very well here. You had better for the present content yourselves with situations as private tutors, and by-and-bye something better may be done.”

Here the door was slightly rapped, and a red-faced servant-maid bearing a huge white bundle on her head came in.

“Does the Fräulein want a dress, or a scarf, or a mantelette this morning?” she asked; “there will not be such another chance before the Festival, and my mistress says she has never had a handsomer lot during all the years she has been Her Majesty’s lady’s-maid.”

My uncle rose, and, bidding her place the bundle on the table in the adjoining room, watched every article as it was taken out with eager interest.

A heavy brocaded silk, a black-ribbed morning dress, thickly trimmed with velvet, were laid aside as too matronly for the Fräulein Sophie; but a glittering fabric of pale blue and gold, so intermixed that it looked like the sea in full sunlight, called forth an exclamation of delight and admiration from the Colonel.

“How much is this?” he asked directly.

“Thirty-six gulden, Herr Oberste, and was only worn by the Queen during a week’s visit she paid to her sister in the spring.”

He held it up to the light for a few minutes contemplatively, repeating “wun-

derschön!" (superbly beautiful!) to himself.

"If your mistress will take thirty gulden my daughter shall have it. What else have you?"

"A black lace scarf, Herr Oberste—best lace, and just suitable to wear with the blue silk dress, at twenty-four gulden: a French parasol in flowered silk and white lining, at twelve gulden—a berthe in real Mechlin, at the same. That is all."

"I think the dress is the only likely thing. The parasol is pretty, but too dear, and the other articles are not wanted. Will you ask the Fräulein to fit it on? You will find her in the kitchen, or in her bedroom."

The girl having replaced the rejected vanities in her packing-cloth, and folded the selected one temptingly outside, wished

us all "Guten Appetit," and disappeared.

We resumed our conversation, but before ten minutes had elapsed the door was suddenly opened, and a pretty, fresh, dark-haired girl burst in. Her plump, youthful figure was arrayed in the sheeny royal robe we had just before lost sight of, and looked in it almost as out of place as a daisy in a hot-house. Seeing us, she stood irresolute on the threshold, growing rosier every moment with vexed confusion; but my uncle took her by the hand and introduced us. She went through the ceremony very shyly, and then childishly whispered:—

"Papa, I want you in the next room."

And thither the Colonel followed her, stroking her red cheeks laughingly. A long and animated dialogue took place.

"See, papachen" (I do so love those

pretty German diminutives), said Sophie, coaxingly, "what a lovely dress it is, and so much too long for me that there will be stuff enough to make a new top when this one is worn out. Why, the dress will last me no end of time! And it will not want very much alteration—a little taking in at the waist and shoulders, a little shortening of the sleeves; fancy, papachen, my figure being so nearly like the queen's! You will let me have it, won't you? and I will take it this very day to Heinrich Haugh to have it altered."

"Thirty-six gulden is a great deal of money," replied the Colonel; "and I am not certain whether we can get it for less. Thirty-six gulden is a good deal out of ninety-six,* and you know, my dear, that is

* Eight pounds.

to be your allowance, as it is your sister's. What else do you think you will want this year?"

"Hardly anything, papa. Oh, yes, I shall want some ribbon for my hat, a thick petticoat for the winter, and a pair of woollen shoes, but positively nothing else, and these will cost very little."

"The petticoat will be ten gulden if you have one like your mama's," observed my uncle.

"Oh, no, I shall not have one so good. Eight gulden will buy a very nice grey one, like Ottilie's."

"But you must not expect another silk dress for two years at least, Sophiechen—in fact, not till you are married, I think?"

At which the Colonel laughed; and

Sophie, taking this, I suppose, as a consent, flew past us like a scared young partridge. We did not see her again till she came to lay the cloth for the twelve o'clock dinner, to which my uncle had cordially invited us. She was dressed very differently then, and in a manner much more suited to her girlish simplicity. She had on a skirt of very fine ribbed cotton, with a white ground and tiny bunches of violets and forget-me-nots sprinkled over it; and a full white cambric bodice, or, as ladies say, *top*, tied at the waist and wrists with violet-coloured ribbons. Her hair, which was superbly luxuriant and glossy, with a glossiness that was nature and not art, was brushed off her clear, white forehead, and braided in wide circles on either side of her pretty round head.

With the dinner came my aunt, a brisk, sharp-faced, talkative little lady, with the pleasantest face and the neatest figure in the world. She was pleased to find we could speak German, and asked us questions without end.

John seemed to get most of her sympathy, because, I suppose, he was the younger and better-looking; for, in spite of John Wilke's well-known assertion to the contrary, I have found all my life long that good looks are a letter of recommendation, needing no translation, all the world over—especially with women.

The dinner was short, simple, and unceremonious. I, who am no epicure, and, I think, must have come into the world with a less susceptible palate than most people, managed very well to satisfy my hunger

with the black bread, soup, oleaginous hen-stew, and sugary, floury composition of peas and French beans, even before the pancakes came on. But John, after many vigorous attempts, gave it up in despair, and accounted for his want of appetite by the fact that he had a toothache; seeing the pancakes, however, he immediately recollected that they were the only things he could eat when so suffering, at which little Sophie's bright eyes fixed sympathetically on him, and she refused any herself.

"Why, Sophiechen," said her father, good-humouredly, "you said only the other day you liked them better than anything, and we have them so seldom!"

She blushed painfully, and stammered something about not being hungry, but the Colonel was unfortunately obtuse, and persisted:

“And you thought Cousin John must be hungry, wasn’t that it?”

At which she blushed deeper still, but John adroitly turned the conversation into another channel; and soon, the cloth being removed, we went into the garden.

Why it should be called a garden, I do not know, for it was only a strip of turf at the back of the house, divided from the large orchard adjoining, by a low fence, and shaded by a pear-tree. To reach it we had to pass through an objectionable little yard, which seemed to be the old bottle, wood, ashes, and general rubbish receptacle of the six families inhabiting the dwelling. Immediately beyond this was a real garden, that is to say, a small enclosure, laid out very formally in beds of German asters, and chrysanthemums, but without any notion

of gardening, since the prevailing idea appeared to be, to get the greatest number of flowers in the smallest possible space. There were also unpleasant little refuse heaps in the corners, spoiling whatever effect might otherwise have been gained by so startling a show of colour. An effeminate-looking man, with long silky brown locks, and dressed in a loose suit of pink and brown plaid, was pruning among the flowers. He greeted us with a lazy stare, but made no signs of recognition.

“That is Count Cress, the house-owner,” said my uncle with a sly wink, and placing his forefinger alongside his nose (which I afterwards discovered to be an infallible sign of facetiousness), “a *particular* friend of mine. See how carefully he attends to his garden; but he keeps the enjoyment of it to himself.”

We now seated ourselves around a deal table beneath the pear-tree; my aunt busied herself in winding silk on an intricate machine, something like a miniature briareus of a windmill, and Sophie began knitting vigorously at a grey-worsted stocking. The Colonel produced some cigars and pears from his pocket, which were soon disposed of; and then after a long pinch of snuff he said, with the air of a man who had made up his mind,

“Well, nephews, till you meet with suitable occupations, I suppose you would wish for comfortable board and lodging, without going to the expense of an hotel. My wife and I have talked it over for some days past, and have come to the conclusion that as we have a spare bed-room just now we can offer it to you.”

“That is very kind; indeed, sir, we do not wish to put you to any inconvenience,” said John.

“It is quite a chance that we are so situated,” pursued my uncle; “for we have hitherto let it to a young gentleman, who had no other vice but that he could not pay his rent, and in consequence of this weighing on his mind, he would lie awake at night and groan so terribly that I don’t know which was hardest to bear, the groans or the loss of the money. About a week before every quarter-day the groaning would commence, and though we pitied him a good deal, and took off several gulden, we could not do it as a principle, and gave him up at last. But you, my dear nephews, I feel sure will not keep Sophie awake by your groans, or me waiting for my money.

There are two beds in the room, and I trust you will find it comfortable."

"Oh! never fear, uncle," I exclaimed, "we are but too grateful for your kindness in offering it."

"I shall only charge you the same amount as I did the young gentleman, viz., ten gulden a week, which will include bed-linen and towels for both, coffee in the morning and supper at night. You can easily get dinner in the town for thirty kreutzers each, and we shall always expect you as visitors on Sundays, when we do not go into the country. I am sorry, nephews, that I cannot do more for poor Sophie's children, but when a man has to give allowance to two married daughters out of his income, he cannot be generous if he would. I can only say that I am very glad to see you, and wish you success."

We thanked him cordially, at which his eyes moistened, and he kissed us both. Then, as if to cheer our spirits, and make all things pleasant, he sent Sophie in for a bottle of Neckar wine, which looked very red and luscious, but proved to be a delusion and a snare; and because of its dire effects upon myself and poor brother John, was not soon forgotten.

By-and-bye a friend or two joined us—old military companions of the Colonel—coffee was brought, and conversation became very animated. The principal topics were the movements of the royal family of Würtemberg, the fruit crops, the minor political matters of Europe, and the daily gossip of the little capital. I was amazed to see what an amount of argumentation and interest could be bestowed on the mer-

est minutiae of domestic life; but John entered at once into the spirit of the talkers, and soon made a most favourable impression on the new-comers. His ready wit and versatile powers, combined with his good looks and genuine good-heartedness, were already winning him friends, as they had done from boyhood.

“Well, Hendy,” he said at night, as we retired to rest, “I don’t think it will do at all.”

“What won’t do?”

“Anything and everything. Why, the grass will soon grow in our brains in this sleepy country, if it does not first grow over my grave—which it certainly will, if I drink any more Neckar wine. And then, to give music-lessons for eighteenpence an hour, as my uncle proposes! Oh! Hendy, Hendy, it will be a mean, despicable, weari-

some life!—I cannot bear to think of it. I would rather dig for gold in Australia, or clear a forest in the backwoods—”

“No work is mean or despicable if the worker is honest,” I said; “and I am far from thinking that our proposed occupations as tutors, or clerks, will bring us discredit here, where there is no aristocracy of wealth, and no hedges set up between fifty kinds of respectability. Be plucky, John, and look on the sunny side of things. Here, at least, no one will turn a cold shoulder upon us because we are our father’s sons. There’s a good deal of comfort in that.”

“If it weren’t for you, Hendy, I should turn vagabond, I verily believe,” he said sadly; “old fellow, am I worth all the trouble you take to keep me from it?”

“No, John, not at all. Good night.”

By-and-bye he addressed me in a different strain.

“I say, Hendy, what do you think of the Sophiechen? Her nose is pretty, but her cheeks are too broad and Suabian for beauty—and then she has nothing to say for herself. I can see she is a coquette though, for all her shyness.”

“Sophie a coquette! I cannot think it.”

“Wait and see. Did you not notice what a trick she has of letting her hair all down, to show it off? But you know, Hendy, you were always the dullest of beings with women. Good night.

CHAPTER II.

I WAS awakened next morning by a loud knock at the door, at which, thinking I had greatly overslept myself, I jumped out of bed and opened it. I found, however, no hot water as I expected, but a small tray, on which were two cups of coffee, without saucers, and two rolls of light puffy bread. As it was nearly eight o'clock, and I knew my uncle's household to be a very early one, I imagined this unceremonious break-

fast came as a hint that we were too late for the family meal.

However, having risen on other occasions at a very early hour, and still receiving the same treatment, I discovered that it was the customary *déjeûner*, and etiquette.

At ten o'clock we always found bread and fruit on the dining-room table, and sometimes Sophie and my aunt were there to partake it with us, but not often. We seldom had more than glimpses of them in the morning, when my aunt would be habited in a loose cotton wrapper, and Sophie in a holland dress, like a pinafore, in which she looked more youthful still. After dinner we sat out of doors, and though Sophie was still shy, she left off blushing when we addressed her, and co-

quetted a good deal, John said, though I could not see it.

As to my uncle, it was marvellous to see how he frittered away his time in a continued state of interest and bustle about the management of other people's affairs. That he sometimes took an immense deal of pains to infinitely small purpose I could see daily, but it was a great comfort that the importance of every occurrence rose in exact proportion to the share he had taken in it. Such men stand the best chance in the world of being happy, since, if they do not turn everything they touch into gold like Midas, they at least turn it into a subject of self-congratulation, which is more nearly allied to cheerfulness than gold will ever be.

Consequently, my uncle was never so

blithe as when seeking apartments for a friend, or squabbling with the Count—and at these times he was sure to be amiable abroad, and easy to be pleased at home. If, however, he had no negotiations in hand, no *petites affaires de guerre*, he was irritable in the extreme as to the manner and matter of his meals, sometimes violently passionate even; and then my aunt, Sophie, and Rösele the maid, would be vexed and quiet, for they all held him in great awe. On the third morning after our arrival, I was aware of some unusual commotion in the house. Rösele was in constant service as bearer of messages to the tenants of the stories above and below, and though she was as silent as ever, she grinned in a manner expressive of enjoyment, and her large dull eyes, though they had no light to sparkle in them,

winked with quite as much effect. My aunt's step and voice did double duty, and she now and then kept disappearing behind some neighbour's curtained glass door, whilst the Colonel chuckled, and, with his finger laid across his nose, took more snuff than ever—and there was peace in the house.

John and I were occupied the greater part of the day in making use of some letters of introduction we had brought with us from one good old friend in England, the only man who had stood up fearlessly to defend our father's name, and had openly owned friendship for his sons. When we returned about six o'clock, we found the sitting-room a very animated seat of Congress in miniature—and being invited in, learned the matter of discussion.

My uncle sat at the table evidently as President of the Diet, and was listening with the utmost interest to a tall, lanky, and somewhat eccentric but highly estimable elderly woman, who filled the place of house-assistant to a young married couple residing in the third story, and who, as her mistress was too young and timid, represented her political opinions. Her name was Frederika, abbreviated to the short and inharmonious *Ricky*, by which she was always called; and as there was something in the sound of it which implied dilapidation of what was once sound, and a general falling off from former greenness, it seemed certainly applicable. She was gaunt, with an unusual prominence of knuckle, as though her bones had been fighting all her life to get the mastery of her flesh, and, having

done so, let you know it with distorted grins of satisfaction. Her grey hair was brushed off her face and twisted in a tight knot at the back of her head, to make it as little of an ornament as possible ; and her face, which perhaps in youth had been neither unkindly nor ill-looking, was so flattened and worn by labour, that it had lost all other individuality, like a penny-piece. She was dressed in a scant brown skirt and nankeen jacket, over which was pinned a yellow silk handkerchief, and stood at the head of the table gesticulating and haranguing in the shrillest Suabish German, an odd figure of an orator. Her speech had certainly not much logic in it, and she had a strange incapability of seeing the true relations of things ; but she was fluent, which often covers both these faults

in more gifted speakers, and if she lacked wit she had abundance of animation.

“If he thinks he is going to frighten me from shaking my carpets out of the window, he is as much mistaken as the man who sold his cow”—(some mythological Suabish allusion I cannot explain, and doubt whether she could have done so herself)—“as if there was dust enough to hurt his trumpery flowers, which came every one of them from Carlsruhe! ‘Holy Mother!’ was there ever such a man? I should like to hear him say ‘*dirty lodgers,*’ again—but he said it—he did say it, Herr Oberste; and though he is the son of a Prince, which I don’t believe, if he ever says it again I’ll give him an answer. If it rains three days before and three days after, I’ll give him an answer. Christine Hermann may be called *guädige*

Frau * by a Queen in her carriage, but she won't be called so by me. I'll never believe the Count is married to her, not if he told me so till he was hungry; and if he is, much luck may she have with a man who spends all his days fiddling after flowers, and wears pink trowsers loose enough to get his body in."

"Married or not married to Christine Hermann, he shall be taught to let his tenants alone," said the Colonel; "he *shall* leave us alone!" he continued vigorously, striking his fist on the table, "or we'll leave the house—your mistress will leave the house, Ricky—and you, Frau Sax—and you, Professor Grelinger—we'll all leave at Martini, and go where we may shake our rugs out of the only window there is for

* Gracious lady.

the purpose, without spoiling *such beautiful flowers.*"

This last touch of sarcasm met with hearty laughter and applause.

"And where the landlord is married to the landlady without any doubts on the subject," added the Frau Sax, a quiet matronly lady; "if it were not for you, Herr Oberste, we should have left long ago; only it is not pleasant to change lodgings, and with such a gentleman in the house, we always seem safe from all troubles and responsibility, as my husband says."

At this the Colonel laid his hand on his heart and bowed benignly.

"But I do think that Count Cress and Fräulein Hermann must be married," said Professor Grelinger, a man whose entire life had been devoted to the study of Substan-

tives, without, I was sorry to learn, any very solid reward, “or he would never live in the same house with her, under the very eyes of the Court.”

“Remember it is not his Court. His father is a Bavarian Prince, and in the service of King Max,” replied my uncle; “the story goes, that he has forbidden his son’s marriage, under the threat of disinheritance; and that the Count only waits till his father dies, to marry Fräulein Hermann, or proclaim the marriage—if it has already taken place. But against her I have nothing to say; she is never disagreeable or interfering, unless the Count puts her up to it, and I only wish he would leave us in her hands. However, as you have all placed this matter with me, I shall take the earliest opportunity

of meeting the Count, and coming to a clear understanding. We will either shake the dust off our carpets in peace, or leave at Martini."

The assembly then broke up. My aunt and Sophie had tea, as was their custom, to which John and I were invited, being of English, *ergo* tea-drinking habits; but in this meal the Colonel never joined, being usually absent at his club. To-night, however, he was too high-spirited and excited at the anticipated meeting with his antagonist, to think of anything else. Accordingly he sat down with us, and imagined, with much exactness, the forthcoming conversation, taking care to give the Count all the silly speeches, and to reserve the wit and cutting epigram to himself.

It chanced, however, that I was witness of the entire little scene, and found that if my uncle had not perspectively turned the tables, he had at least put them considerably awry. Our bed-room looked towards the back of the house, and directly over the patch of flower-garden, which had been throughout the *quæstio vexata*. Consequently, as I was reading there, later in the evening, I saw my uncle approach the garden gate, and make his most ceremonious military salute to Count Cress, who was watering his flowers. The latter looked up, and returned it stiffly, meeting the Colonel's malicious little smile with the most provoking indifference. I viewed him narrowly, and think I never saw so concentrated an expression of indolence in any human being.

His long flossy hair, which looked too lazy to curl, hung in waves to his throat; his greenish blue eyes had a sleepy depth in them, like sea-water in a calm; every feature of his pale, fair face seemed as though its telegraphic chain to the brain had been once strained too highly, and had lost its elasticity ever since. His beard looked slowly grown and slovenly cultivated. There was indolence expressed even in his finger-tips, which touched everything cautiously, as though momentarily expectant of being bitten; and in the soft, creeping tread of his feet.

“Good evening to you, Count Cress.”

“I have the honour to wish the Herr Oberste good evening.”

“I trust that we shall soon have a shower to wash the dust off your flowers,”

said my uncle, pretending to look up on the clouds in a weatherwise way, but keeping one eye all the time on the Count, to see how his stray shot should succeed.

“I trust we shall,” replied the other, cutting off a dead rose; “it’s devilishly dry!” And he turned his back to the enemy, and went on with his work, humming Schubert’s “Song of the Swan.”

“It’s a pity your garden is so near the house, Count.” Second stray shot.

“Indeed!” Another clip, and the air was changed to the “Wanderer.”

This was too much for the Colonel’s patience. His face blazed for an instant, and then he puffed out his speech, straight and swift, like a cannon-ball.

“But we are not going to have our floors dusty, and our lives harassed, for the sake

of a few worthless flowers; and if you think that I, who am a Colonel, late of His Majesty's cavalry, and who lost half an ear in Bonaparte's service, am going to sit tamely by, and have well-born ladies insulted under the same roof, by you—you, Count, who never felt the prick of a pin, much less a sword running through your body—you are mistaken, greatly mistaken, Count, and I have come to tell you so."

"You are quite welcome to run your sword through my body, if it will give you any pleasure," answered the Count, in a lazy drawl. "It is not the first time you have expressed a wish to that effect."

"Nor will it be the last!" said my uncle fiercely. "Nor will it be the last, of that I am convinced, Count Cress."

"So am I, Herr Oberste, for it is oftener

pleasanter to talk about a thing than to do it."

"You may have as many cowardly scruples as you like," retorted my uncle, not acknowledging the implied satire; "I have none, sir; if I fell, I should have shed my blood in the cause of misused innocence—and if—if the consequences were unpleasant to yourself, I could only say it would have served you right."

"You are not speaking like a gentleman, Herr Oberste," said the Count, good-naturedly as ever.

"I am not speaking *to* a gentleman," replied the Colonel with fierceness.

"You're devilishly impudent!" said the Count.

"I can return the compliment," said the Colonel.

Here a female voice called from a lower window "Gustave," and the Count, pocketing his gardening knife, locked the gate, and, wishing my uncle good evening, entered the house. Soon after the Colonel went in too; and when I joined the supper-table he was relating, with ineffable glee, the above defeat, which he metamorphosed, however, into a decided victory. Rösele, who had been flirting with two soldiers in the woodyard below, was called up to hear the story; and the oratorical Ricky had also a version of it before bed-time, fragments of which she was constantly repeating to herself for days after, acting the two speakers with considerable warmth of manner and freedom of expression.

The next morning my uncle wrote a formal note, in the name of himself and

the other lodgers, to say that, under the circumstances, there was no course left for them but to give notice to leave at Martini.

The Count wrote in reply that he must refer them on every occasion to Fräulein Hermann, the owner of the house; so the matter rested. Carpets were shaken *ad libitum*, and the Colonel was triumphant. As to Count Cress, he gardened as much as ever, and was always either trimming flowers or singing duets with his wife. She was a handsome woman, about thirty, with a fine, highly-cultivated voice, which had been formerly in the service of the Court opera-house; and a striking figure, always habited in the costliest, though not always the tastefulest, costume. Her

manners, however, were quiet and unobtrusive, and I was pleased to see that my uncle, in spite of the unkind reports about her marriage, always treated her with the utmost reverence and politeness. He was a good chivalric old fellow, after all.

CHAPTER III.

A WEEK passed, and we had as yet obtained no employment, though I spent every day in wearisome applications at schools and mercantile offices. From these John had generally begged off. He was too proud and high-spirited to solicit a favour of anyone, and had not yet received that experience which comes with years, teaching us the difference between servility and self-help,

between unreal and real independence. I would rather have stood in the square at Stuttgart, asking every passer-by, "Give me work," than have run into debt with my good-natured but not over-rich uncle. Therefore I persevered with a brute-like stolidity, resolving to succeed at last. For this superabundance of iron in my nature I take no credit to myself. I do not know whether it is a human virtue even, since this very quality is shown in universal biography to have been quite as often the secret of the deepest evil as of the truest, unlimited good. In the case of a book-loving, unambitious man like myself, who have lived, as it were, out of harm's way, and in the reach only of mediocre vices and virtues, this same innate power

of subserving the intention to the fulfilment, has, I thank God for it, made my life better and happier.

One or two tutorships in schools had been offered to us, but the salary was so low, the hours so heavy, and the living so meagre, that I had not the heart to close with the principals, even for a trial month. They were generally good-hearted, frugal men, by no means of Mr. Squeer's pattern. Having been accustomed all their lives to the same hard fare and daily drudgery, they saw in them neither humiliation nor hardship, and dilated on the duties required with the utmost openness and sincerity.

"If saur-kraut is your objection," said one benevolent old gentleman to me,

“it is easily removed. Having had several English pupils of late years, we have found it expedient to abolish it entirely from the school-room table.”

“My pupils pay two hundred and forty gulden a-year” (twenty pounds), said another, “and I could not afford to give an English professor more than that sum. I assure you in this country it is considered fair remuneration.”

But I did not allow myself to be cast down. I felt assured we should succeed in time, and anything was better than to return to England, where white hands and a tarnished name are the very worst canvassers for a respectable employment.

Meantime John had regained his old boyish exuberance of spirits, and troubled

himself little about either the past or the future. Whilst the present was easy to him he wanted nothing. Sometimes this utter regardlessness to the grave responsibilities of a newly-begun life vexed me; but when I thought of the shadow and sorrow that had passed over his early manhood, I could but rejoice that it was so.

At last I heard of a vacancy in a mercantile house at Cannstatt (the very pretty, almost suburban spa on the banks of the Neckar), and set off early one morning to secure it, if possible, for John or myself.

“Mind and make good terms if you close a bargain for *me*,” called out my brother, as he waved an adieu from the garden, where he smoked a cigar, with

a romance of Mühlbach's in his hands. I had no sooner crossed the road than he was at the orchard fence vociferating at the top of his voice:—

“Only from ten to four, Hendy. I could not undertake closer work than that, anyhow. And stand out for the florins.”

It was a very pretty walk to Cannstatt, lying all the way through the royal park. What a pity that such a park, abounding as it does in countless fragmentary gardens, bosky shades, and noble trees, forming I do not know how many church-aisles, with the delicate fretwork of their branches—what a pity that all this, and so much more that is pleasant to the heart, should be disfigured by the foul stream of refuse

which runs amid the greenery, every now and then greeting your eyes and nose with a most dispellent power upon enjoyment. Otherwise the place is lovely. There is a rusticity about the coarse long grass, the wooden duck-houses, the careless groups, almost tangles of flowers, which contrast with the majesty—miniature, perhaps, but majesty still—of the large palace in the distance, before which two lads keep guard as sentinels; the sound of the drums as the soldiers beat round the town, the monster statuary, and the royal equipages dashing about, rather shabby in the main, but with servants standing behind in grand scarlet coats, like London postmen on the Queen's birthday.

All this pleased me. I am fonder of

the homely and the humorous element in life than I am of the sublime and over-refined. When I state that I like a country fair, and have even held up a stray child or two to see Punch give the final beating to his wife—that I have often in the course of my existence made great intimacies with members of the so-called *Great Unwashed* of society, and have had reason to mistrust the social arithmetic of the world in consequence—I fear the reader will feel that he is making a very vulgar acquaintance. As my vulgarity, however, will always be put plainly before you, without any varnish or false colouring, there is no chance of anyone involuntarily catching the trick of it.

I soon found the house of the mer-

chant to whom I had been referred, and received from him a polite greeting. He was a middle-aged, good-looking, but heavily-formed man, who impressed you with the idea that he had all his life acted up to one great prejudice, till it had become dignified in his eyes to a principle; whilst he looked upon the principles of other people as mere prejudices only. His opinion of the English as a nation seemed to be high, but as individuals low enough. My face, however, was honest, he said, and he thought there was good stuff in me. Finally, it was settled that the place of English and French correspondent was offered to my brother or myself, on condition of furnishing a letter of security for our trustworthiness

from the Oberste Von Blum. The salary was not high, but sufficient for a bachelor's wants in so cheap a country, and altogether I congratulated myself on the affair.

I did not hurry home, but strolled round the town, which is prettily situated—every road leading to it, an orchard, every hill round it, a vineyard. Hither, the mineral waters of the Neckar attract crowds, all through the summer months; and as it was now July, the bathing season was at its height. Omnibuses and droskies were continually driving in from Stuttgart, full of pleasure-seekers, who soon dispersed in the bath-rooms, or in the pretty gardens around them, where tables and benches were provided in plenty for their accommodation. There was a *table d'hôte* at one

o'clock, and feeling considerable appetite after my light and early breakfast, I sat down to dinner. The tables were crowded. Immediately opposite to me sat Count Cress and his handsome wife—he looking lazy and good-tempered as ever, she very talkative and showy. She did not look happy, however, and once or twice I caught her eyes fixed upon him with a strange, anxious, watchful look. But I did not notice them much. Every one else was so cheerful and sociable, that I soon forgot their existence even. The dinner was well cooked, and I ate the *nudel-suppe*, and the boiled beef with its condiments of sugared horse-radish, and pickled herring, and the veal-cutlets, and fowl-pudding, and the venison and potato salad, and paid my eighteenpence with a cheerful heart.

After dinner the company take possession of the tables and benches, coffee, wine, and rolls are in request, and the waiters have an uneasy time of it. Poor fellows! I think they are about the only harassed-looking people one sees in a German bathing place!

I was smoking a cigar in a solitary nook, from whence I could contemplate the animated groups below, when I was suddenly aroused by a voice that I knew. It was the slow drawl of Count Cress, who was walking with his wife in the secluded path behind me.

“You won’t see the matter in the right light, Christine,” he said, with an attempt at energy. “I always thought till now that you were the most clear-headed and far-seeing of women—but you are all

alike. You make mountains of mole-hills—you strain at gnats, and swallow camels.”

“No,” she answered in a quiet determined way, “I am not making mountains of mole-hills, Gustave. Whatever you like to say, you must know in your heart that I am right and whilst I know I am right, I will not be put aside by anyone or anything”

“But I can’t help it,” interrupted the Count; “think of it, Christine—was ever man so unfortunately circumstanced as I am?”

“Then you own that you are in the wrong? Gustave, why do you deceive me, and treat me like a child? If you would only be honest and straightforward with me, I would not care.” She

said this passionately, and gasped out the last words, as if sobbing.

He kissed her several times, and tried to soothe her in a penitent, caressing way, called her his own love, his beautiful Christine, his life's treasure, many times over; still she wept on without speaking.

"You know I never loved any one but you. Can you not trust me for so short a time? Think of the consequences to myself, and make a sacrifice, Christine."

"It is *you* who have to think of the consequences to me," she exclaimed indignantly; "it is *you* whose duty it is to make the sacrifice. A man who will not do this for a woman cannot love her."

"I have done this—I have given up everything for you. You are very hard

upon me, after all the proofs of devotion that I have shewed you, Christine. Have I not thrown up position, and family connections, and chances of bettering myself—”

“If you cannot be generous, be just. Have I lost nothing for your sake? A man can but sacrifice position, and it is by no means proved that you have done so; every word you utter only testifies your reluctance to endanger it—but a woman sacrifices her beauty, her youth, her reputation, her all—”

“You speak as though you had gained nothing. Could anyone have loved you more faithfully than I have done during these five years? Have you not had everything your heart could desire?”

“I was not complaining of your con-

duct to me. I only ask what you have no right to refuse—what you cannot refuse. Stay with me or declare me to be your wife in the eyes of the world.”

He had been on his knees before her, fondling her hands and kissing them now and then with whispered expressions of endearment; he suddenly rose and lighted a cigar.

“This is cursed folly, you know, Christine! Have I not told you a thousand times what the consequences of such a mad act would be? Only wait in patience till I am my own master, and then you shall have all as you wish. Come, we have had enough of this unpleasant conversation, and it is really too hot to talk much to-day. Let us go below and have some coffee. You

must want it after being in such a passion."

They went, and I, who had been so unwilling a listener, seized the opportunity of escaping from my nook, lest I should be again taken into some lovers' confidence. In half an hour's time I reached home, and found John chatting gaily with Sophie and a young lady friend in the garden. The two girls were knitting, but trusted all the work to their fingers, whilst their bright eyes were busy elsewhere. I quite envied John all the saucy friendly glances he obtained, and wished I knew his secret of drawing from their rosy lips such unconstrained talk and playful laughter. But my presence seemed to check their mirthfulness, so I seated myself a little apart and drew out a book.

John immediately rose and came to me.

“Well, old fellow, what news?”

“Very good. The situation is open to one of us—if you don’t take it, I shall. But I do think, John, it would suit you. We are not likely to hear of any more clerkships, and I should be a better tutor than you.”

“It is hardly fair for me to have the choice, being the younger; still, as you say, Hendy, I am not at all fitted to have anything to do with youngsters. I have not patience enough. And a clerkship, after all, is a more gentlemanly thing. I expect I shall like it very well. I can live here, you know, and walk or ride up every morning. It will be very pleasant, especially as

Sophie is such a lively little thing. But the time and the salary, Hendy?"

I told him, and he looked grave at both.

"It won't do, Hendy. You certainly never thought I would slave from nine till five for seventy pounds a-year! It's preposterous, and if you undertake it I shall think you have lost your senses."

"No, John, just think it over. A tutorship will involve much more wearisome work and smaller pay. Here, the salary will increase and may ultimately be a fair competence; you will have all your evenings to yourself, and be, as it were, your own master. For the present I should certainly advise you to take it."

He walked up and down before me

with his hands in his pockets, as he always did when undecided. At last he said:—

“Of course you know best, Hendy—but it seems a poor beginning. However, I’ll take it, and so let the matter rest for to-day.”

“But Herr Schneider wants an interview with you at once—to-day,” I said; “as it is necessary he should decide the matter before other candidates present themselves. You had better, therefore, walk to Cannstatt this afternoon.”

“That I won’t, if I lose the situation by it,” he exclaimed pettishly. “I don’t see why I should spoil the girls’ pleasure or my own by running off just now. We are having such fun. Sophie says the prettiest little pertnesses in the

world, and the other is a sharp girl—come and be polite to the ladies for once in your life, Hendy.”

“I will, if you start off for Cannstatt,” I said silyly.

It was of no use to try and persuade him. He joined the young ladies, and I resumed my book. For an hour their merry nonsense lasted without intermission, and then there was a hush. Sophie and her friend hurried in-doors, whilst John came up to me.

“I’ve thought better of it, and am going to Herr Schneider’s,” he said, with the half-penitent manner which had always been so irresistible in him as a boy. “Don’t scold, Hendy, you know I intend to act sensibly, only my intentions and deeds are unruly steeds, and

won't keep up together. One gallops and the other trots, and flog or pull as you may, Hendy, you can't bring them to an even pace."

"I suppose you find it easier to leave now that you have lost your companions?" I said, insinuatingly.

He smiled and looked conscious.

"The young ladies are going with me, and we shall have coffee in the New Bath gardens, and enjoy ourselves. Isn't that much better than wandering about alone? You see, Hendy, I always find out the pleasantest way of doing things."

The orchard seemed a lonely place to me without their gay young voices. Could I never, like John, find out the pleasantest way of doing things?

CHAPTER IV.

ON the same day that John commenced his duties at Cannstatt (I can see him now as he started off, well-dressed, confident, and happy, enticing Sophie to nod a second farewell from the window, and looking so handsome with that bright mood upon him), I was engaged by a Stuttgart banker as resident tutor in the family of the Baroness Weiler. She was a widow lady, living in great seclusion in the country, about twenty

miles from Stuttgart, and my only pupil was a boy of eleven years, whose education had been much neglected. The salary contented me; so did the prospects held out by Herr Roser.

“You will find,” he said, “that your comforts will be in every way considered; separate rooms will be assigned you, and the Baroness is one of those women who are kind and attentive to everybody. The life in Schloss Weiler will, no doubt, be retired, as most country lives are, but the estate boasts of lovely vineyards and romantic scenery, and to a lover of nature and philosophic contemplation, as, by your look, I should judge you to be, sir, I can fancy no more desirable location.”

A dissertation on Kantism followed,

in no way relating to the subject in question, but which gave me opportune time for reflection; and at the end of it I was ready to accept the offer. The only and heavy drawback to my satisfaction in so doing was the thought of being separated from my brother. Still, as I knew the misery of idleness, I set the matter before my eyes as cheerfully as I could. So when John returned at night he found me busily packing my portmanteau (it contained little but books), and wanted to know the reason; he looked very grave at my explanation.

“No, Hendy, don’t go. Old boy, you are father, and mother, and brother, and sister, and house, and home to me. What shall I do without my dear, dry,

old Johnson, to preach to me, and say just the right and wise things, when I get into the dumps, and all the world seems going wrong? On my word, Hendy, you are a deal too clever and book-learned, and that sort of thing, to be wasted on a child, whom Sophie might teach. Do you know, I've been planning all sorts of pleasant Utopias to-night, as I walked home from office. I'm to be made partner in the Schneider business and marry Sophie, and you are to become head professor at some college or other, and marry Ottilie."

I was saved from the necessity of an argument by a summons to supper. As it was my last night, in addition to the usual sausage, ham, and potatoes, a grand *kuchen* of apricots and almonds, eggs

garnished with anchovies, and a delicate little loaf of that kind of brown bread called *Englische*, were provided. My aunt, in her bustling, kind-hearted way, made the most of both the feast and the occasion.

“Remember, nephew Henderson,” she said, helping me to an appalling pêle-mêle of delicacies, “to-morrow evening you will not be here to eat of our dishes, so you must do double justice to them to-day. We shall think of you when we finish the remainder of the *kuchen* another day. I dare say you will live well at the Schloss, but home-spice is not tasted abroad, as my poor mother used to say; and however good cooks may be, you can’t get them to feel as if things were their own, and

what they don't waste they often steal. Is the cake good? I half feared Sophie put too much cinnamon in it. She is so careless sometimes!"

"It is delicious!" and I looked at the wilful little housekeeper, and would have complimented her on her skill, had she not been too much occupied to listen to me. She was trying to pronounce some English words after John. Her eyes were alight with girlish frolic and enjoyment; her pretty round mouth made a dozen enticing little *moues* in the endeavour, and between each came a merry peal of laughter. It almost pained me to see her so gay, for it testified that by her, at least, I should not be missed or regretted.

"Oh! mamachen," she exclaimed, when she had fairly tired of her *th's* and *r's*;

“Emilie is going to take the children and myself to the Silberburg to-morrow; the Saxes are going, and my cousin John thinks he can get there by seven o’clock. Will it not be delightful? You must go too, mama, and I may make a fruit-cake to carry with me, may I not?”

“There will be quite enough left of this one,” said my aunt; “with a few anise-brods, it will do very well.”

Sophie looked disappointed, but held her peace. She never questioned her parents’ authority, even in the most trifling matters.

“Stay here at any rate till to-morrow, Hendy boy,” urged John; “the evening will not be half so pleasant if you are away.”

Sophie said nothing. I think if she had only looked up I should have stayed; as it was, I shook my head.

But when the next morning came, and I knew that she had risen early on purpose to say good-bye, I felt angry with myself for having adhered to my first resolution. The son of the Baroness Weiler could afford to lose a day's study infinitely better than I could spare a day's pleasure.

"You will not forget me, Sophie?" I said as I stood on the threshold.

She answered with a dewy smile in her eyes, and a few words of timid kindly greeting. My aunt and uncle kissed me with much affection; the former stuffing some milchbrods and slices of sausage into my pocket, the latter presenting me with a pair of worsted gloves,

prefacing the gift with the intelligence that he had bought them for himself, but finding them too small, had luckily thought of me.

“They are not bad gloves,” he said; “and had the sewing been better, the price would have been fifty kreutzers at least. Wear them, my dear nephew, and prosper. Make my respects to the Baroness, and when you come home to see us, mind you bring word what wages she gives her housemaids.”

On the staircase we met Ricky, who bore on her head an immense tub of water, the weight of which had the effect of stiffening her neck, and impeding, in no small degree, her oratorical performances.

“Going!” she exclaimed, with many

half-formed inarticulations; “you going from above, and he from below? Name of Jesus! Who isn’t going to-day? I thought something was to happen, it rained so hard last night. Well, rainy or fine, I shall have a happy time of it when the Count is gone; and my mistress’s carpets will not disgrace my mother in heaven. Adè, adè, it will be a beautiful day for those who go, or those who stay.”

The entrance-hall was littered with goods and chattels in different stages of packing, and we had to pick our way carefully through piles of clothes, music, books, pots of flowers, and other miscellaneous articles.

The Count was kneeling before a valise on the threshold of his room, and

looked up as we passed, to speak sharply to a slovenly-dressed boy of five, who was amusing himself with picking at the flowers. Another child, almost a baby, was gazing on from the floor, with large-eyed surprise; whilst the nurse, a heavy, untidy girl, who seemed to have only just enough sense to be cunning, had seized the opportunity to steal a few minutes' conversation with the blue-jacketed porter waiting outside the door.

But the saddest feature of this domestic scene was the figure of Christine Hermann. We could see her sitting in the inner-room, her fine figure drooped despairingly; her handsome, healthful face lined and scarred with weeping.

I had never mentioned to anyone,

not even to John, the conversation which I had so unwillingly heard in the bath-garden, and which explained to me the secret of this miserable scene; but my brother was too much interested in me just then to notice it, and we passed through the street and into the park, busily chatting of my prospects.

Just as we reached the basin in front of the palace, where the ducks were pluming their feathers ready for the day, the sound of a hasty step caused us to turn round.

It was Sophie. She came bounding up the avenue, and with her hat in her hand, her long, lustrous braids falling to her waist, her cheeks glowing with the exercise and the pleasure of it, her scarf flying out like a wing, she looked the

prettiest personification of haste! Having reached us, she stood still, palpitating and smiling, but for some moments was too much out of breath to speak.

“Papa desired me to give you this,” she said at last, holding out a little packet to me; “but I thought I should never catch you, you walked so fast. So now I will bid you good-bye again, Henderson, I am too tired with running to go as far as the station.”

“But I shall soon be back—do wait for me here,” John exclaimed; “it is very pleasant to smell the orange-trees and watch the ducks.”

She shook hands with me, smiled an assent to John, and seated herself on the bench near.

It was a pretty picture, and has often

risen to my memory since. The sky was almost an Italian one, as the skies of Southern Germany often are, so tranquilly, and, if I may so express it, so religiously beautiful; whilst the intensity of the clearness and the colouring left nothing further for the mind to imagine of heavenliness. The avenue through which we had come was shaded almost to twilight by trees now in the superb splendour of midsummer, and the luxury of them made the surrounding distance one soft, velvety mist of green.

But near us, the sun was dancing gaily on the cool basin, kissing the marble Venus and Psyche beside it, and pricking with gold the balmy orange-trees whose wet blossoms were strewed around. A gentle air shook them off,

even as we stood, and the last glimpse I caught of Sophie was as she stooped to pick them up. I never feel the beauty of a dewy, grand summer morning—I never smell the sweet breath of orange-trees — I never hear the gentle plash of ducks, or the awakening note of the wood choir, but I think of her as I saw her then.

CHAPTER V.

IT is the easiest thing in the world for a book-worm to fancy himself a philosopher superior to all the petty vexations of life. When I lived in a lazy enjoyment of study with an income more than adequate to my wants, and with no hindrances to my selfish industry, I used to fancy that the world might turn topsy-turvy if it pleased. If it would only light me on my feet, with my brains somewhere in my body, and

a volume of Homer within reach, I thought I could bear such an earthquake better than most people.

Alas! the world was turning round as comfortably as the sails of a mill—my brains were in their right place—not Homer alone, but all his noble kin of poets were only divided from me by a few yards—yet because I had just tasted for the first time in my life a glimpse of happy domestic life—of *home*, in fact—and was about to enter upon laborious duties, beyond the reach of that sweet and good influence I felt gloomy and discontented. My uncle's packet in some measure distracted my sulkiness. He had enclosed three gulden (five shillings) in a small piece of paper, on which was written the following:—

“DEAR NEPHEW HENDERSON,

“I feel assured you will do well, and only wish I could give you more substantial encouragement at your first step in life; but a florin is a florin, and you will find your wants few at the Schloss. Rest assured that I will watch over your brother like a father; and it is no small relief to me to have a lodger who neither runs into debt nor groans half the night long. You would do well to read the works of Professor Gauter of this town, on the English and German languages; they would greatly improve your method of instruction.

“Your affectionate uncle,

“J. VON B.”

I could not help smiling at the home-

liness of my uncle's generosity ; yet it was so genuine and hearty that it touched me.

The journey by rail from Stuttgart to Ludwigsburg occupied little more than half an hour ; from the latter place I was to take the *eilwagen* to Marbach, where the Baroness's carriage would meet me ; but the post-boys were only half-way through their tin cans of garlic soup and cones of black bread, so I had time to ascertain that the old-fashioned town boasted of no end of soldiers, a large castle with a handsome park, and opposite to it a pretty, but now neglected, residence of some favourite of the former king.

Being very hungry, I turned into the Restauration near the railway station,

and procured some stale rolls and cold coffee, for twopence-halfpenny. I would willingly have paid more, but better fare was not to be had — indeed, there was nothing else, excepting beer of that deep-red, frothy kind, which deceives you into the idea that it is very brisk and strong. Of this the landlady continually drew supplies for some soldiers who were lounging in the room, and whose conversation turned upon beer only. It struck me as being a pity that such strong young fellows should have nothing better to do, especially as during my journey I had seen numbers of women working like men in the fields.

I was soon summoned by the post-boy, a consequential little fellow, small, but old, dressed in a gaudy yellow coat,

rather abrupt in the tapering of the tails, blue trowsers, and a black hat with slight pretensions to brim. His horn was tied round his neck with cord and green tassels, and though there were only places for four victims, and we were packed in so tightly that my uppermost thought during the whole way was about the impossibility of getting unpacked again, he still kept on blowing his horn with quite a martial air. This made me think that he was fond of creating a sensation, but only an old woman at a bread and cherry stall, and a flock of geese, were there to be impressed by him. An important man, dressed like a policeman, mounted the dickey by his side, and at last the old carriage started off, the two officials quarrelling good-temperedly

all the way, and we unfortunate passengers learning acutely every moment what the feelings of pigs and sheep must be when packed up for Smithfield.

I was so squeezed that I could not reach my head to the window to look out. I could only see the boughs of fruit-laden trees which seemed to overarch our heads all the way; and one can imagine the feelings of delight with which I hailed the dirty village of Marbach where Schiller was born. Here I found an old-fashioned open carriage, with two good horses, awaiting me; and though the roads were bad and hilly, the grand moustached coachman drove at a brisk pace. The landscape had a pleasant, prosperous, fruity look, that I

liked. All the surrounding hills were vineyards, whilst the level land skirting them was irregularly planted out with flax, Indian and Welsh corn, tobacco, and beet-root; the whole scene reminding you of an artist's palette, where many shades of green and purple, burnt sienna, chrome yellow, and pale maize are rubbed promiscuously. What would a Suffolk farmer say to these hedgeless fields? On either side of the road were strips of orchard, and the trees dropped so luxuriously, that I could have plucked the fruit as I passed beneath.

Here and there a few women with bare heads were cutting grass and digging fallow land; or a stout girl, venderess of course green earthenware from the town, would be resting by the

way-side, with her basket for once off her head. Otherwise the scene was as solitary as the Snowdon district, till when you came to a village. Then the sound of our wheels brought out the geese, the children, and the cows, from the lower compartments of the houses to the slough of despond which formed a kind of washy embankment in front of them—the men and women, combing flax by their doors, would look up and give a courteous *Grüss Gott* to me;—even the stork on the quaint wooden tower of the church would shift its standing leg, as if bound to notice our coming.

At length a sudden turn in the road brought us in sight of the Schloss. I must own that the first view of it surprised me, for I had heard that it

had been built in the thirteenth century, that not a stone of it had shaken since; and my idea of an old German castle was of something extraordinarily imposing, and hoary with mediæval majesty. I saw before me a square, gaunt building, rising abruptly from a wooded hill, its great height enhanced by a low roof, and a small pointed turret at each corner, and by its bare grey walls, whose monotony was only broken by a few narrow windows irregularly made. As it faced me I was reminded of one or two very old farm-houses I had seen in England, but a nearer approach shewed me the extreme loftiness and thickness of its walls, the battered escutcheons engraved over the portcullis, and the traces of an old stone wall which had

formerly encircled it, now, however, choked up by blooming orchards. There must have been a trench or moat in the feudal times, for the descent from the road into the castle garden was so steep, that at first I thought the man was driving me down the cellar. However, I held tight to my seat, and alighted safe and sound in a circular courtyard. Here a slim manservant, dressed in neat grey, and of so quiet and gentlemanlike a demeanour that I at once judged from him of the tone of the household—ushered me up two flights of winding stone stairs, to the end of a long gallery—finally into the presence of the Baroness.

It was a spacious and airy apartment, having several alcoves hung with white

linen curtains, each containing a small table and high-backed chair. The walls were painted in light blue and grey, with pretty imitations of panels and cornices, and the floor was of smooth white wood, inlaid with stripes of polished brown. On one side of the room was a table, around which stood a sofa and several chairs, all of dark shining oak and blue cloth, ornamented on the backs with family quarterings in tapestry work, and of the same stately, old-fashioned shape. A curious clock in green enamel and gold, formed like an obelisk, stood in one corner; there were also some portraits of ladies dressed in the style of a hundred years back, with powdered hair, low-cut bodices, and bare bosoms; an antique carved oak cabinet,

and stands for bagatelle, chess and mill-boards.

The Baroness was a tall, slight woman, about five-and-thirty, with a graceful bend of the neck and shoulders, and a small spirited head, reminding you of a beautiful Arab steed. Her features, even her hands, and slenderly arched feet, had the same character, an intensification of mental strength and susceptibility being combined with the utmost delicacy and refinement of physical outline. Her eyes were of soft deep blue, with a ring of gold round a dark pupil, and had that spiritual, earnest look which renders the portraits of Shelley and Schiller so beautiful; the sweet sensitive mouth, indeed the whole face, called up a vision more especially of the former

poet. But though there was that in it which told you she had suffered, perhaps still suffered, from some great cause of sorrow, it was not an habitually sad face. On the contrary, I never saw one with so much vivacity and play of expression.

She wore a dress of black cloth, richly trimmed with jet, fitting closely to her supple figure, and relieved at the bosom and wrists with old point lace. Her burnished brown hair, instead of hanging around her neck with the pretty untidiness so common in the present day, was elegantly and simply dressed, so as to give dignity and repose to the head; and she wore no jewellery.

As she advanced, I thought I must have gone back to the middle ages, and that

it was some brave and tender mistress of the castle in feudal times who walked out of a picture frame to greet me.

“Mr. Brown, you are very, very welcome to Weiler,” said a voice, sweet and clear as the note of a thrush at spring-tide; “you see I can speak English, so that you will not feel utterly isolated from all that is home-like. I hope and trust that, in spite of its dulness, we shall be able to make our country-house tolerable to you.”

I thanked her for her kind consideration, and we chatted in a friendly unconstrained manner about various subjects. Naturally one of my first inquiries was after my pupil. Just a shade of sadness was in her face and voice as she replied,

“You will find Carl very backward

and wild, Mr. Brown; but he has an affectionate heart, and if you once win it your task will be an easy one. I am sorry to say he has been much indulged by an aunt who had the care of him till he was nine years old. I feel assured, however, by your face that you are firm, and shall trust him to you with the utmost confidence."

She then rang the bell, and ordered that her son might be sent in at once.

Half-an-hour passed and no one came. I saw her glance impatiently towards the door, and bite her lip with mingled pain and vexation for several minutes before she spoke. At last she said,

"May I trouble you to ring the bell, Mr. Brown? I am ashamed that Carl should appear so ungracious."

Here the gentlemanly servant appeared, looking rather frightened.

“Heinrich, why have I to speak twice? Where is my son?”

“We cannot find him, Madame.”

“Where have you sought him?” she asked quite calmly.

“Everywhere, Madame—in the orchard, the garden, the pavilion, in the vineyard even.”

“Send Friedrich to me.”

The man bowed; soon after the door was burst open by an older servant, who fell down on his knees before his mistress, sobbing and praying for forgiveness.

“This is childishness, Friedrich,” she said with vexed impatience; “you would have better served me by doing your duty than by all these tears and apologies.

When and where did you leave Count Carl? ”

“ Not half-an-hour since on my honour—not half-an-hour since,” he cried.

“ Where was he—what was he doing? ”

“ He was swimming his porcelain ducks under the fountain, Gnädige Frau.”

She rose to her feet and said in a voice of deep, quiet anger,

“ You are telling me lies, Friedrich; I have only returned from the garden within a quarter of an hour, and during the space of two hours that I sat in the pavilion Count Carl never came near the fountain. Stand up, look at me and speak the truth.”

The stupid, frightened fellow obeyed like a child—who, indeed, could have stood against her noble anger?

He was too frightened to weep now, for the Baroness had turned from him as from an insect that had stung her, and sank pale and trembling into her chair.

I motioned him to leave the room, and then she said,

“It seems foolish to be alarmed, but my son is so heedless and passionate, that I am never quite easy unless he is at home. I suppose the anticipation of your coming made him resolve to run away; and Hermine being—”

She broke off abruptly and rose, saying she must give orders to the servants to continue the search, and would send Heinrich to show me my rooms and serve me with luncheon. Then with a kind smile, though I could see that tears were in her eyes, she left me.

It was a lovely, hazy summer afternoon, and feeling indisposed to my usual occupations, as one generally does in a strange place and at the commencement of a new existence, I made an extended survey of the Schloss. In front (for the entrance by the courtyard was at the back) was a small terraced garden, stone steps leading from one terrace to the other, and in the lowest a little fountain, whose waters dripped with a pleasant indolence on the neglected china ducks. Rising with a steep ascent from the garden, lay one interminable orchard, the boundaries being lost in some places in a deep foss, in others by little wildernesses of fruit-trees. From the highest spots ran down flights of ancient stone steps, mossed and incrustated with the

rains and damps of centuries, and connected here and there by fragments of the old wall I have before mentioned. Rude bridges of stone or wood, having a locked gate at the head, opened on to the common road, which, winding around the Schloss grounds, could be seen for miles, "like a thread of silver running through a tapestry of green," towards Ludwigsburg. On the highest orchard ground stood a large and lofty circular pavilion built in wood. You ascended by a spiral staircase, and whilst the lower part was open all round, thus being especially adapted for summer, the upper was walled and plastered, as if the owner liked to be abroad in autumn and spring days as well. From the latter, the view was extensive, combining the best features

of the country I have already described, with glimpses of white villages, and, farther off, the spires of Ludwigsburg and the hoary old fortress which watched it opposite, like a lion crouched before the prey it intended to devour. A carriage toiling slowly up a distant hill looked like a fly on the coloured landscape of a window blind.

The buzzing, perfumed, voluptuous summer air was delicious to me, and I sat down on the pavilion steps and drank it like wine. It has been a happy circumstance for me throughout life that my two leading passions have been a love of nature and a love of books. Even the poorest man has a fair chance of gratifying these, and the richest and busiest can have no purer and better for his holidays

of thought. I put the love of nature first, for in an age of such high intellectual culture as the present, books, even the truest and best, may be the means of teaching us a nobler but at the same time a more egotistical humanity. In fields and woods, where the linnets and daisies are all thoughts of heaven to the heart that is rightly tuned, we learn the only simple, loving, earnest religion.

My reverie was interrupted by the voice of the Baroness, who had approached so softly that I quite started to see her before me. She smiled at my look of surprise.

"I am delighted to find you here, and looking really as if you felt at home, Mr. Brown. Will you prefer to stay or to accompany me into the

village? I generally make a round of visits there every week amongst my poor people, and you have no idea how much business I find to do. Sometimes I am called in as doctor, sometimes as lawyer, sometimes as priest, and just now I feel especially anxious for work, being so uneasy about Carl."

I rose at once, and begged permission to carry a certain mysterious little basket which she held on her arm, but on catching sight of the distant carriage she sat down, saying,

"I am rather expecting my daughter from Ludwigsburg, where she is now staying; we will therefore wait till this carriage is near enough for me to see if she is there."

She watched very, very eagerly in the direction of the coming vehicle, and, strange to say, grew a shade paler and looked unmistakably grieved as she turned to me with a quiet—

“Yes, it is my daughter.”

Soon the carriage was lost behind the wooded basement of the hill, and then we heard the wheels grating on the road beneath the pavilion. The Baroness walked to the orchard's edge and looked over the old wall.

“Hermine, you can alight here,” she said.

I heard no answer, but in a minute or two a young lady, fair, fashionable, and gracious-looking, sprang up the steps.

“Are you quite well, mama? Is it not dreadfully dusty?”

She clasped her mother's hand lightly for a moment, just touched her lips on hers, and that was all. I thought it rather a cold greeting between mother and daughter—and such a mother too! There was not a passing expression on her face, or a tone from her lips, that did not tell the intense lovingness of the Baroness's nature.

“Do not go away, Mr. Brown,” she said; “come and be introduced to my daughter.”

“How do you get on with Carl?” were that young lady's first words to me.

“Mr. Brown has not yet seen him,” said the Baroness, with a pained look; “He has run away, and is not to be found. Ah! Hermine, Hermine, be more

patient with him in future. You do not know how much anxiety you cause me."

"Mama, it is unjust of you to say so. It is Carl who renders everybody miserable; do I not try all day long to make him better and more obedient? Certainly his improvement is slow, but I should never feel as if I had done my duty if I did not persevere with him."

"You will never succeed, Hermine; your method might do with some children, but it is the very wrong one for Carl. Shall I never convince you of this?" said the Baroness with gentle firmness.

Hermine burst out laughing.

"Rest easy, dear mama, Carl will be left entirely to you and Mr. Brown

for some time to come. Indeed, I think I shall give him up altogether."

The Baroness looked up inquiringly, and the young girl continued:—

"I am going off to Munich with Aunt Carline next week, and shall not return home till the Volk's Fest in September. She talks of Switzerland, but that at present is only an idea."

"And you will really be away so long, Hermine?"

"Of course I consult your wishes on the subject. That is why I am here to-day."

There was a pause, during which Hermine plucked abstractedly at a shrub near, and her mother's eyes followed her with inexpressible sadness.

"Hermine, if you respect my wishes

you will not go anywhere with your aunt Carline."

"Mama, why will you always be so unjust towards her? Why do you try to set me against my best friend? Who can be more anxious for my welfare than she is? Who can love me better?" This was said with angry haste and flushed cheeks.

"Your mother can," said the Baroness, softly.

"But you cannot take me to Court, or to watering-places, or to Switzerland," answered Hermine in a gentler key; "and you know, mama, that I should die in this dull place. At my age such a feeling is surely natural. You would not have me old at eighteen?"

The conversation was now becoming too private for the ears of a stranger, so I

withdrew to a distant seat, and taking out my book (I never, upon any occasion, go out of doors without a book in some pocket or other) began to read. For an hour the Baroness and Hermine remained standing where I left them, engaged in earnest conversation. Sometimes the voice of the latter would be raised to a high and angry key ; but she evidently gained her point at last, for when they joined me, her face was radiant and her spirits exhilarated. The Baroness looked pale and sad. The sadness wore off at dinner-time however, for Hermine was so bright, so witty, and so amiable, that there was no withstanding her. Indeed, had I not remembered the petty capriciousness and irritability of her voice an hour before, I could have fancied nothing pleasanter or prettier than her

apple-blossom cheeks, light, loose-flowing hair, bright eyes, and piquante conversation.

The dinner was simple but elegant. We seated ourselves in high-backed, stately chairs at an oval table, on the middle of which stood a dewy pyramid of flowers and fruit. The solemn, moustached Heinrich waited on us with admirable attentiveness, and there was something baronial and romantic in drinking the wine of the vineyard that we saw from the windows, and in knowing that everything composing the dinner, beginning with the soup and ending with the preserved quince, was produced on the estate.

The white drawing-room, whither we adjourned for coffee, led out of the dining-room. The Baroness again grew silent, and, standing at a window, looked out

thoughtfully, no doubt anxious for her truant child. Hermine challenged me to a game of chess in a distant recess, but when I began to place the men she stopped me, saying in a low voice,

“Don’t think me very wicked, Mr. Brown, if I say that I have no intention of playing, and that it was only a little *ruse* of mine to have some conversation with you respecting my brother Carl——”

“The Baroness has already informed me of his shortcomings and idiosyncrasies of disposition,” I interrupted quite coldly, “and I am fully prepared for the difficulties of my undertaking.”

“But I assure you,” said Hermine, with a smile, and taking my implied reproof very good-naturedly, “Mama, kind and clever as she is, does not understand Carl’s

character. How should she, when the child was never much with her till he was nine years old? I, on the contrary, have been with him constantly, and you will find him headstrong, ignorant, and self-willed——”

“Precisely the account given me by the Baroness,” I interposed again.

“Mama would treat him as if he were reasonable, loving, and unselfish. She has treated him so for two years, and the consequence is that, instead of improving, he has gone backward,” continued the young lady, without heeding my interruption. “It is of no use, Mr. Brown, and if you wish to save yourself a good deal of trouble you will begin by firmness and not indulgence. It is natural that I should be so anxious about my only brother, the future head of the family; and I cannot tell you

how much I am relieved and comforted by the thought that in my absence there will be some one wise enough and firm enough to govern him." She added, after a pause, "It is very probable that I shall spend some weeks at home in the autumn—I do hope I shall find you here, Mr. Brown—I hear so much of your scholarly attainments, that I think twice before I speak to you; and if I promise to be a very docile and diligent pupil, will you give me a few lessons in Italian during the winter evenings?"

"I shall feel proud to be of service to you," I replied still coldly.

"That is very kind; I really already anticipate some long studious winter evenings."

"Hermine," said the Baroness, still

standing in her old place by the window, "it is time for you to go, my child, or you will arrive so late at Ludwigsburg."

"Directly, mama;" she dropped her voice to a lower key and added: "Do tell Carl that I love him—do speak kindly to him for me, Mr. Brown—he does not love me—I know, I feel that he does not, yet I am never unkind to him—I only urge him to be more manly and tractable. If you could make him feel kindly towards me, I cannot say how glad and grateful I should be; for it is very hard that, with the best and kindest motives, I only bring upon myself dislike and distrust. You do not know how hard it is!"

She leaned her cheek upon her hand,

and for a minute or two looked very grave. Then she turned to me and said :

“Will you use your good influence with Carl for me, Mr Brown ? ”

“ I will certainly do all that I can, Fräulein.”

“Thank you very much. I shall go away quite happy now. I do so want Carl and mama and every one to understand and love me. Adieu, Mr. Brown. Adieu. Many thanks.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE carriage could no longer be traced on the far white road, and the dropping of the sun behind a distant hill shewed that evening was unmistakeably approaching. Still Carl was not found. I could see that the Baroness grew every moment more anxious, but she sat quite silent and motionless. Once I heard her murmur to herself:

“Carl—Hermine—you will break my heart !”

I wanted to join in the search, but she would not let me.

“If night comes, and he is still missing, I will go too, and will ask you to give me your protection. I cannot rest in the house till I know where my child is; but for the present stay with me. I cannot be alone.”

Just then the door opened softly, and a fair childish face, with dark, peering eyes, looked in.

“Carl!” cried the Baroness, with a voice and face expressive of joy only—“Oh! Carl, how can you be so naughty, so cruel?”

She twined her arms round his neck, kissing his eyes, his forehead, his long, soft hair; then, as if she felt that she was caught in an act of weakness, she put him away from her, saying with mild reproach,

“You do not love me, Carl, or you would never pain me thus.”

“I do love you, mama; I love nobody else in the world but you; it is only Hermine who makes you think I do not—and I hate her!” He burst into passionate tears. “We are always unhappy when she is here; and because I knew she was coming, I hid up in the North Tower. I played at being Baron Trenck, mama. I watched the spiders, and wrote verses on the wall, and didn’t mind being prisoner at all, till I had done all my milchbrods and apples. But it grew rather dull at last—so, when I saw that she was quite gone, I came down. You will forgive me, will you not, mama?”

“I have forgiven you already so many times, and yet you are continually giving

me fresh cause for sorrow. Carl, Carl, why not try to love and conciliate your sister, instead of hiding from her as from an enemy—”

“She is my enemy, and I will never humble myself to her,” said the boy, proudly.

The Baroness looked at me wistfully, inquiringly, as much as to say—“Is your heart firm as a lion’s, and tender as a woman’s? May I trust you with the wilful, impressible, mistaught nature of a child whose love has been estranged from me? Will you win him to me, or will you keep him to yourself, and thus render me doubly solitary?”

My heart was honest, and it answered for me.

“It is not myself alone; Mr. Brown

has also a great deal to forgive," said the Baroness. "What must he think of a pupil whose first acquaintance is made under such circumstances? If he punishes you I shall be sorry, but I shall say that you deserve it."

"Carl," I said, "come here."

He did not turn pale or falter or rebel, but for a minute or two gazed at me fixedly; his dark eyes dilated, his breath held, his hands hanging listlessly by his side. Just such an expression of stolid inquiry, a demurred "How far is it safe to rebel—how far is it necessary to obey?" I have seen in young heifers before they will retreat from forbidden herbage.

With a kind of instinctive prudence he came to me.

"I am sure you are going to scold me

very much," he said. "Hermine told me you would ; but I had rather be killed by you than petted by her ; and if you are not her friend, I will love you."

"If you cannot give me your love without conditions, it is not worth my acceptance," I replied ; "and I must have your obedience without it, which will be very disagreeable for both of us."

He came closer to me and looked into my eyes.

"Your mouth is hard, but if you took off your spectacles I believe your eyes would look kind. I thought you would be a very, very tall man, with black hair and sharp eyes, and a strict voice. I don't feel afraid of you now. People who are short and stout, and have blue eyes and dimpled hands, are always good-natured."

“Yes, they are good-natured, Carl, when everything goes on smoothly and right, and they have nothing to irritate or try them; but if they are provoked, and trifled with, and deceived, the anger of tall, dark, stern-looking men is nothing like theirs.”

“I think I should love you if I felt sure you were not a friend of Hermine’s,” he said; “and if I tried to please you, you would never be angry with me, would you, Mr. Brown?”

“The first thing you must do to please me, will be to love your sister.”

“I cannot—I will not!” he cried, breaking out into vehement weeping. “If I love her ever so much, she will not be kind to me. I wish I were a man, and then no one would dare to make me miserable. Mama,

mama, if you let me be alone with you I will never vex you again."

He would have thrown himself into her arms, but she put him gently towards me, whilst her tearful, earnest face pleaded in silence.

I let him weep on for a few minutes; then spoke to him calmly and tenderly.

"Carl," I said, "you are a child, and I am a man more experienced than yourself by many years. But there is one, Carl, to whom I am but a little child, in spite of all my book-learning and knowledge of life—and He, the best teacher man ever had, saw what great misery was in the world, by reason of there being so little brotherly love to bind people together, and make them forgiving towards each other's faults—so He spent his whole Divine life in teaching

us Love as a duty and happiness. If you live to be a man, Carl, you will often have to mix with those whose faults of character are so different from your own, that you may fancy they are inferior to you, and not worthy to be loved. But, unfortunately, we cannot think so humbly of ourselves as of others; and thus often despise where, if we looked closer, we should find much to admire. You will never be happy, Carl—take my word for it—you will never be happy till you can be kind in your heart towards all.”

The Baroness had risen at my last words; she now approached us, and, laying one slender hand on her son’s shoulder, said, with filling eyes,

“ Oh ! Carl, listen to him ! Be loving and good, and make me happy ! ”

I think the boy's nature was really pliable and easy of control—for he melted into penitent tears, and promised to do all that I should desire of him. Afterwards, when he found my treatment to be reasonable and affectionate—my severity to be justice, and not ill-temper—he was ready enough to like me, and to look upon me as a friend.

I am quite of opinion with the large-minded and far-seeing Herbert Spencer, that children have their rights as well as grown men—and think of writing a book upon the subject, when I have saved sufficient money as a tutor to retire to literary ease, and such *auream mediocritatem* as the Roman poet recommended.

CHAPTER VII.

It was a pleasant life at the Schloss, reminding me, in its quietude and untroubled leisure for thought and study, of my old bachelor days at Cambridge. I missed, however, my brother's cheerful voice and jolly supper-parties—the latter with much less regret, since I had more than compensation for any other society but John's, in the sweet, womanly influence of the Baroness.

She was one of those women who seem as if they only lived to bestow their love and fondness on those around her; and her manner, when she knew and liked me, was so tender and yet so motherly, that I frequently forgot she was still beautiful and still young. How often did she remind me of the words of the sweet American poet:—

“She doeth little kindnesses,
Which most leave undone, or despise;
For naught which sets one heart at ease,
Or giveth happiness or peace,
Is low-esteemed in her eyes.”

Our life was regular to monotony. The whole household was up by six o'clock, and at eight we breakfasted; from that time till one I was engaged with Carl, after which I refreshed myself with a cigar in the pavilion. The dinner hour was two. After coffee the Baroness

would join us in a long walk through the vineyards or orchards—sometimes calling on the pastor and head-steward in the village; but though these visits were made in the friendliest way, and she was far too well-bred to be condescending, there was, properly speaking, no more intercourse between them, than there would be in England between a lady and her shoemaker. The Herr Pfarrer was a worthy, jolly old fellow, supporting a wife and several daughters (all as jolly-looking as himself) on sixty pounds a year, with only the addition of wood and wine from the barony; this kind of tithe being customary in Würtemberg. I was often invited to the Pfarr-haus, to partake of one of the numerous daily meals of coffee, bread and fruit, and have every

reason to praise the family hospitality and good-nature. The young ladies were very amiable. Indeed, if they had not accustomed themselves to wear low dresses all day long, and to put their knives into their mouths, I think I should have gone to the Pfarr-haus oftener still. The Amtmann was an ambitious, money-getting individual, extremely jealous of the Baroness's confidence, and, I have good reason to suspect, more careful of other people's encroachments on her property than of his own. He had a son of Carl's age, whom he wished to make a gentleman — thus spoiling the boy's naturally good abilities and amiable disposition, by an inordinate desire of a higher station in life. No sooner was it known that Carl had an English tutor,

than Christian must have one too; and soon after my arrival I encountered in my walks a meek-eyed youth, whom I recognized as the son of my landlady's milkman in Cambridge! Between Carl and Christian, patrician and proletarian, naturally waged a sharp war, only now and then varied by a short interim of peace.

We had no neighbours but these, and few visitors. Sometimes an old officer and his family would drive over from Ludwigsburg or Stuttgart for the day, and enliven us with the intelligence that the King was at Mon Repos, and the Queen at Wildbad; that Prince Weimar had lost two dozen bottles of Moselle out of his cellar; that two Hohenheim students had cut each other's fingers in

fighting a duel; and so on, *ad infinitum*.

Sometimes I wondered that, with a nature so sensitive, a heart so large and loving, a mind so feminine and refined, the Baroness could support this lonely, unsatisfied life. That she was often unhappy, I could not doubt; yet when we made pleasant little picnics to the wood, or she listened to me as I invented grotesque legends and fairy-tales for Carl in the summer twilight, her laugh was the heartiest, her humour the sprightliest, most playful of all—thus testifying to her capability of enjoyment.

“Hermine is away, and mama knows that I love her,” said Carl one day to me, with large-eyed wonder; “has she done anything wicked, that she is not happy?”

“Oh! Carl, Carl, how can you speak of your mother and of wickedness in the same breath? It is the good who often suffer most.”

“But mama was wrong in not loving papa—Aunt Carline said so. She always told me, when I was with her, that I must love papa best; and I did till she went away, and now I have nearly forgotten him. I only remember that he took snuff, and had a very small waist, and used to swear very much. I don’t like people who take snuff; and I know mama does not, for she cannot bear to see Herr Popp do it. Still, I think she ought to have loved papa—don’t you, Mr. Brown?”

I reminded Carl that, as it was high time to begin his Eutropius, he had better leave such psychological questions till

another time; but I could not forget his words, and, coupled with other things I afterwards heard, was enabled to frame from them the sad outlines of the Baroness's story.

It seemed that, at the age of sixteen, beautiful, impulsive, and carefully educated by her mother (an English lady), she had attracted the Baron Weiler—a man many years older than herself, and of jealous disposition. Her father, who was a poor officer in the Prussian army, was only too glad to marry his daughter so advantageously, as far as worldly circumstances went, and did not question the matter of her future happiness. But what sympathy could possibly arise between a young girl of romantic, unsullied mind, and fresh, warm heart, and a man cold, calculating,

and worldly? How could she love him? Even had he tried, would he have made her life complete? But when the first charm of her beauty had worn off for him, he did not try. He took her from her cheerful home in Frankfort to his solitary castle, gave her no companion but a sister-in-law who hated her, and then was enraged because she did not look happy!

Their married life soon grew to be miserable. His habits were selfish and dissipated; and she had too much spirit and conscious rectitude of heart to stoop tamely to the place of slighted mistress of his house, when she was no longer his honoured wife. She was good and pure as an angel, but not so patient. What she did bear—and no one could tell how much bitterness and mortification she suffered from her husband and

sister-in-law—was all for the sake of her children. Year after year she saw their impressible natures almost in the hands, as it were, of the only woman in the world who was her enemy. At last, when she found that she was daily misrepresented to them — that their love was waning — the mother's heart could endure no longer, and she fought a desperate battle for the sacred right of her children's love.

She fought it and won. Young, gentle, womanly as she was, her woe and wrath made her terrible. So often has that scene been described to me by old faithful lovers of the Baroness in the village, that I can see it all—the slight, brave, outraged woman, and the worldly, heartless sister—her only relative in the world—as they stood face to

face. How grand she must have been in her indignation ! They told me that her eyes seemed to burn Carline with their intense passion of reproach ; and, as she clenched her hands, and called on Heaven to judge betwixt them who had the justest claim to her children, the woman shrank away, as from the presence of an avenging angel.

It was now explicable to me, how, with so much good sense, firmness, and tact displayed in every other matter, the Baroness should humour Carl and Hermine to the utmost capability of fondness. Naturally Carline had endeavoured to obtain all possible influence over their minds—an influence not easy to undo—which had never been undone in fact, with Hermine ; but Carl, whom the mother always kept at home with

jealous affection, really seemed to love her, in his wild, impulsive way, better than anything else in the world.

Meantime I received frequent and pleasant letters from John. He did not find desk-work so hard as he had expected to do, he said, and really his home was as comfortable as possible; indeed, he had almost got reconciled to the frequent recurrence of sausage and noodle soup, and could now drink the Colonel's wine without any fear of after-results. Ottilie had come home, and he liked her amazingly. She was not so pretty as Sophie, but cleverer and a finer girl—taller, by the head. She had seen more of the world, too, and could talk on any subject. On Sundays they made little excursions into the country, where there was generally a hill to climb, pretty tea-gardens

at the top, and no end of neighbours to join them in coffee and ices. "Do come and see us, Hendy, boy," he urged, affectionately; "it seems ages since I saw your wise, comic, honest, true, old face."

I had been about a month at the Schloss when the Baroness proposed a delightful excursion to Ludwigsburg, where John, the Colonel, my aunt, and cousins were invited to meet us.

"I seldom—in fact, I never go out," she said to me, with the kindest smile; "but your uncle is an old friend of mine, and I want to see you enjoy a really happy day with your brother. You deserve it, for nothing can equal the assiduous and loving care you give my boy"—her noble voice broke down—"oh! Mr. Brown, good, true friend, what a man you will make of Carl,

if you only finish the work you have begun! What can I do to make your life here happier and worthier of you?"

I am a strongly-built man, with plenty of pluck and sinew, small in stature (what a kindness I feel towards the tall, slender, chivalric Leigh Hunt for his nice page about little men!—and to Lord Clarendon, who has left us so charming a group of small heroes), and rough in the main, but tender on the subject of women and children; and when a good and beautiful woman speaks tenderly to me, I slink away like a fool, without having said one of the hundred pretty speeches I could write down on paper. So I merely bowed very low, and attempted to take off my hat; which I could not very well do, as it was not on my head.

What a lovely, sparkling, bird-singing day it was! Could one think, to look upon the landscape, glowing like Aladdin's enchanted garden with rich jewellery of purple, golden, and ruby-coloured fruit, with the vine-hills and beech-coppices cut out so clearly against an enamel sky, with a constant ringing in the air of birds—could one think then of the trees bare, of the wintry sleet shrouding the soft pasturage, of the empty nest or frozen lark?

We alighted at the castle gates outside the town, where the whole party awaited us—John, blithe and handsome as ever; the Colonel, stout, and squeezed, and witty (he was always wittier when he wore his tightest coat, as if the compression sent up all superfluous liveliness to his cerebellum, from whence it was forced to evaporate);

my aunt unceasingly gesticulating, nervous (all German ladies are nervous), and talkative; the two girls dressed both alike, in pink muslin. Sophie shrank back blushing and smiling like a child at the appearance of the Baroness; but Ottilie, who seemed to be put forward by her parents as a substitute for them all, advanced with proper politeness.

“If it is quite agreeable to you,” she said, after the first salutations were over, “we will go at once to the ruins and take some lunch; as all of us have had a journey I think it will be welcome. John, will you come with me to call the old man who keeps the keys—he is so deaf that I shall never make him hear alone. Sophie, you had better show Cousin Henderson the way.”

She ran off with John, who was delighted to be busy, and they turned down a wooded slope towards a little house or hut, on the shutters of which they hammered vigorously with stones, calling out—"Gottlieb, Gottlieb, willst Du uns den Schlüssel bringen?" Meantime, leaving the town and castle on our right, we followed a winding path through the wood before us, and, after many mimic dells and glades, caught sight of a round, grey tower.

I turned to my companion.

"What a pleasant day!—what a pleasure it is to me to see you again, Sophie!"

She did not answer for a moment, and I saw that tears were on her dark eye-lashes, and that her cheek was flushed, as if from vexation or annoyance.

"Yes, Henderson," she said, demurely.

I felt so happy at being with her bright little self again, so glad to find John and myself once more together—and together without any cares or anxieties—that I did not think much of Sophie's tears then ; in fact, I hardly noticed them till afterwards. It seemed impossible that she could be unhappy on such a day !

“How merry you must be at home now, with Ottilie back again, and John so full of fun and spirits ! I often think of you, Sophie, and wish I could pop in now and then.”

Again a mechanical “Yes.”

We now reached the ruin, or ruin well imitated ; for the tower is new, and only a pretended antiquity. Here Ottilie and John soon joined us, followed by an old man, who kept repeating to himself, “Eight

hundred and one—that was the year !” Evidently he was a believer in the make-believe ruin. There were two rooms—one with a table and benches for picnic parties ; another hung with armour, and containing an *Æolian* harp, which played mournfully. But its sounds were soon drowned in the clatter of knives and forks and the cheerful confusion of voices which generally ensues on the occasion of a promiscuous dinner. The room was too small to admit of the stately *Heinrich* ; so, after having deposited his basket of venison and quail pasties, cream cakes and bottles of *Rüdesheim* on the table, he was dismissed.

I saw the *Baroness* under a new aspect that day. There was much well-meant but fussy homage done to her by my uncle’s family, which I am sure must have been

most disagreeable to a nature so unostentatious as hers ; but she received all with such sweet good-nature, neither deprecating nor seeming to perceive it, and entered so genially into the spirit of our enjoyment, that soon the homage died off of itself.

“ Oh ! Ottilie, what a *Kuchen* this is ! ” exclaimed John, who contrived to wait upon everyone very gracefully, and cut a hearty lunch too—“ from this day, Ottilie Blum, you are immortal ; and, were I rich, I would erect a monument in your honour, inscribed—‘ To the memory of one whose skilfulness in cakes was never equalled in the known world ! ’ ”

He added something in a lower tone, which I did not hear, but which made her blush and smile reprovingly at him.

“ You are indeed a clever little house-

keeper," said the Baroness. "They excel Hermann's—do they not, Carlchen?"

"No one praises thy *Kuchen*, Sophiele," said the Colonel, patting his youngest daughter's head, "so I will eat it, to do thee compliment."

"Ottile does everything better than I do," Sophie exclaimed pettishly; "if she is cleverer than I am, I cannot help it."

She looked angrily, tearfully, towards the place where her sister sat; but Ottile was so much engaged in talking to John, that the poor little arrow fell harmless.

They made a bonnie pair, John and Ottile. As he leaned over her, so blithe, so frank-looking, so manly and active, I thought how well he was matched by that intelligent, lively, helpful girl, a girl whose clear eyes and open brow showed you un-

mistakeably her good sense, her energetic, hopeful nature. I fancy the Baroness thought the same, for I observed her looking intently at them just then.

When our repast was over, Ottilie proposed that we should call the old man to light us down the subterranean chambers, these being the greatest curiosities of the place.

“Oh! how delightful!” exclaimed Carl, clapping his hand, “it will be ten times better than the prison at Weiler, Mr. Brown; and now you won’t want to bring that into your stories again, you can get twice as many hobgoblins into such large places.”

The old man lighted his lantern, and the ladies having looped up their skirts, we prepared to follow him down some

narrow winding steps, smelling very mouldy.

“Sophie, are you not coming?” I said, as I observed the young girl slip into the open air.

“I have been down often before—I don’t care to go.”

“Then I will stay and keep you company.”

“No, go, Cousin Henderson, I would rather not have you wait on my account. Carl is calling you—please go.”

She sprang like a fawn towards the wood, and I followed the rest of the party down-stairs, vexed and puzzled at Sophie’s unaccountable caprice. It was a weird, unearthly place, smelling like the vault of a church. Having descended the steps, we were ushered through a dark, damp passage,

the old man holding the lantern above his head, still muttering to himself "Eight hundred and one." Suddenly he stopped and faced us.

"Here," he said, "is the holy Peter the Hermit, reading his Bible, as seen by Rudolph Kurz, who made this exact image in the year eleven hundred."

It was a ghostly figure, in coloured plaister, representing the great Anti-Saracen Moor as seated at a table, his head raised to heaven, his hands lying on an open Bible. The colouring of the flesh and hair, the wrinkles even, were given with an exactitude amounting to unpleasantness, and one could almost fancy the holy hermit had taken refuge there hundreds of years since, and, instead of dying, had been petrified.

“What an uncomfortable looking old gentleman!” exclaimed John; “Ottilie, let me get behind you, I feel quite frightened.”

“You will put him into your next tale, Mr. Brown, won’t you?” whispered Carl, “and make him come to life again, and frighten the deaf old man almost out of his wits!”

Further on, in another niche, sat the figures of a knight and his squire, clad in complete armour, looking fresher and haler than the hermit, as if petrification had overtaken them in a jolly period of their lives. This was a renowned Duke Hubert, who cut off the heads of two hundred Saracens in battle, and was wonderfully pious in the matter of genuflexions. We were also shown some infernal machinery of torture, used in the glorious days of chivalry; and

I noticed that our old guide's spirits increased *pro ratâ* with the grimness and hideousness of his curiosities.

We were returning; the cicerone foremost, then the Baroness, followed by Ottilie and John, when we heard a curious creaking noise over our heads, and immediately afterwards some loose stones fell heavily from the roof; John caught back Ottilie in time to save her, but one of them struck the Baroness just over the temple; and, with a sharp exclamation of pain, she reeled and fell—not on the damp steps, for John, with his usual promptitude of action, pushed by Ottilie, and caught her in his arms.

Carrying her easily as he would have done a child—for he was a strong, active young fellow—he half flattened the old

man against the wall, and in a minute's time she was placed in a chair of the picnic room. Thither we all hastened, anxious enough, not the less so when we saw her deadly white, almost fainting, and with blood trickling fast from the wound.

Quickly and tenderly Otilie loosened her bonnet and dress, whilst John bathed her brow, and—for we had no better remedy at hand—tore his pocket-handkerchief into strips, dipped them in brandy, and bound them round the injured temple. Then he held some water to her lips, and was still holding the glass and supporting her head, when she revived.

With the first faintest glow of returning colour to her cheeks she was her old self again.

“How unpardonable of me to give you all so much trouble!” she said, smilingly. “Thank you, Fräulein Ottilie, thank you, Mr. Brown, for your kind care of me, but I am much better now—do not let me hinder your enjoyment any longer. Please—please, leave me and make the most of this lovely afternoon.”

Thinking she would really be better without so many buzzing round her, especially without Carl, who was inconsolable at the sight of his mama’s pale face, I took him with me to go in search of Sophie. The Colonel also went out, and I was amused to hear him cross-examining the old man as to the accident, in his military, Napoleonic way.

“Explain to me, if you please, the cause of so unheard of, so unpardonable

an accident; a pretty scrape you will all get into, whose business it is to keep the ruin !”

“ Indeed, Herr Oberst,” began the old man tremblingly ; “ it was nobody’s fault, but a very, very old tree was being cut down overhead, and that I suppose was the cause of it; so you see, Herr Oberst, I am innocent and the woodman too, for he couldn’t help it if the roots were tough, and he had to cut hard; how could he tell that the stones were loose beneath ?”

I left the old Colonel vituperating and threatening in his best style, and went to look for Sophie.

I called, “ Sophie ! Sophie !” many times, but no one answered. At length I came to a little hollow in the innermost re-

cesses of the wood, where I found her. She was sitting on the trunk of an old tree, with her head bowed on her knees, and weeping so violently that the sobs shook her whole frame. Luckily Carl was behind me in the narrow path.

“Carlchen,” I said softly, so that the young girl was not disturbed; “run back by the same way that you came, I will follow, and don’t lose sight of me.”

The child turned at once, and I approached Sophie.

“Little Cousin Sophie, you are troubled?—may I speak to you?—may I comfort you if I can?”

She started up!—could that be my bright, little, saucy Sophie? It went to my heart to see her so sorrowful, so utterly woebegone.

“No, Henderson, please don’t leave the others to trouble about me. I will join them directly, indeed I will. Don’t say that you caught me crying. I have nothing to cry about—it is only—only——”

Then she sobbed afresh, and I could bear it no longer. I took her dimpled little hands away from her dripping cheeks, and wiped her eyes with my handkerchief. I do not know what I said, but I remember using one or two pet names, such as I used to Carl—for she seemed almost as much of a child then, in her helpless abandonment to grief, in her tacit childish acceptance of my sympathy.

“I’ve done crying,” she said at last, with a faint little smile; “and if you think they

won't notice my red eyes, I will come with you now."

"We will walk round the ruin first," I replied, drawing her hand through my arm; "by that time the little stars will twinkle again."

"Promise me first," she asked, hesitating and blushing, "promise me that you will not mention to any one having caught me cry—crying. I don't mind you, Cousin Henderson, you are so much older than myself, and like an old friend somehow, but I shouldn't like"—here her voice dropped to a whisper—"I shouldn't like John to know."

We walked once, twice, three times round the ruin; by that time all traces of her weeping were gone. I felt almost a selfish regret in seeing her bright and

happy again, for I could be tenderer, nearer to her in her sorrow. And she had confided, as it were, in me, had received comfort from me, and from no other. I found a joy and satisfaction in this, greater than the occasion accounted for.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN we entered the tower, John and Ottilie were still in attendance on the Baroness, who was, however, much better, and talking to them in a quiet, kind way, happily choosing the very subjects on which they could converse freest and best. Seeing us, she begged them to take a little walk, insisted on it even.

“You will stay with me, will you not,

my child ? ” she said, taking Sophie’s hand; “I am sure you are a quiet, loving, little nurse.”

Sophie blushed to her ears and sat down, still retaining the slender white hand between her own dimpled ones. At first she was very shy, but by-and-bye she grew to be quite as much at home with the Baroness as Otilie had been, who was several years older, had travelled, and was naturally more clever and self-possessed. An hour passed quickly, whilst we—the most sociable, friendly trio in the world—chatted about the ruin, its sham antiquity, its funny hobgoblin legends, its probable history, past and to come. Now and then Sophie glanced in the direction of a distant bench under the trees, where John and Otilie sat in lover-like seclu-

sion. Perhaps she wondered, with girlish curiosity, what they were saying.

At the end of an hour, the Colonel, who had been smoking a cigar in the shade, with his wife knitting and gossiping pleasantly beside him, came up and informed Sophie she must find her sister and get ready, or they should miss the train to Stuttgart.

"I have a favor to ask of you, Herr Oberst," said the Baroness—"a very, very great favour."

The Colonel made a military salute, in order to testify his obedience to her wishes.

"You have two daughters, will you spare me one for a few weeks? It would make me so happy to have your Sophie near me, till I am quite recovered from this hindrance."

The Colonel was delighted, he said—nothing, he felt sure, could give Sophie more pleasure; my aunt was sure of it too. Sophie said nothing, and held down her head.

Just then Ottilie came in, followed by John.

“Only fancy,” exclaimed my aunt, “the Baroness has invited Sophie to the Schloss!—will it not be a treat to her!”

Ottilie’s first expression was that of slight disappointment, her next of genuine sisterly pleasure.

“Dear Sophie, how kind of the Baroness!—pray thank her.”

Sophie looked up, but there were tears in her eyes, and she tried once, twice, to speak, in vain.

“There is nothing to thank me for,

Sophie," said the Baroness; "all the gratitude is on my side, since you consent to cheer our solitude. But your cousin Henderson and I will try to make you very happy."

Sophie was still silent, and looked beseechingly at her sister. The two girls then went outside the ruin, and talked in whispers, walking up and down. Once I heard Sophie say,

"Otilie, how can you be so unkind?—as if he cared for me—as if I wanted him to care for me!"

And Otilie answered angrily, decisively, as elder sisters are apt to do.

"You silly child, I don't mean to tease you, I only speak the truth—why will you not have the sense to think so? Of course you must go, anyhow."

They were still in eager conversation, when the Colonel called out that it was time to go home. Sophie bade her sister an unwilling good-bye, and nestled close to the Baroness, so that John hardly got a word from her at parting.

John and I walked to the station together.

“Well, John, we are both jogging on pretty comfortably now, and settled for a time, I think?”

“Oh! Hendy, I don’t know—I shouldn’t like to think that I was settled for many years at that dismal old counting-house.”

“But work is the necessary good as well as evil of life, John; and when one has a pleasant home, and a bonnie face to welcome you to it, the day’s work, however monotonous, soon passes.”

“The home and the face would be none the less bonnie, after seven hours’ fagging, than after nine or ten,” he said discontentedly.

“And the nine hours won’t grow a minute less by being grumbled over. Work is work, John, all the world over; but if a man puts a plucky face on it, the most uncongenial drudgery is wonderfully smoothed down. *Melius quidquid erit pati . . .*”

“One never gets anything but that sort of philosophy out of you, Hendy,” said my brother, smiling; “I should like for once to see you in a regular grumbling, uneasy way, as I often am—then you would pity me.”

“You will not be uneasy or grumble when you are married, John.”

He started a little, coloured, then looked me full in the face.

“Married! What am I to marry upon? My dear old Johnson, you are dreaming!”

“No, John, I am not dreaming. Do you think that I—who am all eyes and ears where your interests are concerned—do you think that I have not noticed your fondness for Ottilie?”

“I do think I could be fond of Ottilie, Hendy; she is so lively, and, without being pretty, has the nicest face in the world. She is clever, too—clever and accomplished, and well-mannered—just what one would wish to see in a wife. But, bless me, Hendy, boy, I haven’t any idea of marrying yet.”

He tried to laugh the matter off, but I would not let him.

“Then you ought to have, John. No man, be he in a position to marry or not, ought to win the affections of any girl till he is fully determined to make her his wife. Oh! John, John, be warned in time—never enter into flirtations, with the mere idea of amusement. It is the most unmanly, cruel thing a man can do, to possess himself of the first, freshest love of a woman, then throw it away as worthless. God knows, I am faulty enough myself, John, but I could not forgive you if you acted towards Ottilie thus.”

“Oh! Hendy, don’t be frightened. I assure you Ottilie is as heart-whole as ever she was, up to the present moment; and I will not make love to her till after I have proposed—that won’t be too soon, will it?”

“It is not a jesting matter, John. I was never more in earnest than I am now.”

He stopped short and said in a different voice,

“Don’t be vexed, and don’t look so serious, dear old Johnson; I would not make a jest of your word for the world, but on this score you are really alarmed for nothing.”

We had now reached the station, and I turned back alone. Not alone—who could be alone, with such sweet hope in his heart as mine held then?

Oh! tender eyes, that first teach a man’s heart what a paradise the working world may become!—oh! rosy lips, whose lightest word move him more than all the eloquence of grand old poets—oh!

happy, happy secret of love! I feel young again as I recall ye from the past!

We were a very happy party—the Baroness, Sophie, Carl and I. On the brightest days we made little picnics to the woods, or to the summer-house, miles away amid the vineyards, where the Baroness would call some broad-faced Bäbele or Rickele from the flax fields, and fill her lap with our leavings of fruit and cinnamon cakes, delighting all the time to chat with her in her droll Suabish dialect, and bring out the *no* (noch) *nit* (nicht), *bisle* (bischen), &c., in full proportion.

It was sometimes a drawback upon my enjoyment to find that, even after so much daily and hourly intercourse,

Sophie still remained reserved and shy, often flying from my approach, often shrinking from any attempt on my part at exclusive conversation. But she was so young, so unsophisticated and so retiring, that I consoled myself, and hoped to see her soon more happy and at ease in my companionship.

In South Germany it is not unusual for the country-houses to be filled with visitors during the summer months. Many a year had passed since hoary old Weiler had been cheered with this jolly custom; for the Baroness's life, as I have before suggested, had hitherto been especially secluded and painful. But in Sophie's bright young presence she seemed to grow young and happy again; and, accordingly, to please Sophie and

Carl, and perhaps myself, she sent a general invitation to the Colonel's family, for the inauguration of the vintage. My uncle never did a thing by halves, in the way of giving to it its due importance — believing himself born, I think, to testify in his own generation how many words, conclusions, affirmations and negations, may go to the smallest mite of an affair. It took him, therefore, a full fortnight and a dozen long letters to arrange the matter satisfactorily; but at the end of that time the whole dear little party—my uncle and aunt, Ottilie and John, who I hoped would appear in the light of her lover—made their appearance at the Schloss.

When I look back upon my childhood I can remember no day of great

anticipated pleasure, on which a thunder-storm, a missing companion, a sprained ankle, or some other unpleasant disillusion, did not happen to mar the expected enjoyment. So was it now: the weather was superb; the Baroness was an admirable hostess, forming plans for her visitors' pleasure with so little apparent effort, that everyone could only feel himself in a delightfully enjoyable home; the Colonel's good-humour and gallantry knew no bounds; my aunt's nerves were not obtrusively disagreeable; the girls were amiable, unaffectedly pleased, and looked their best. I think the fault must have been with John. He was one of those people who, like mercury in a barometer, mark the point of the social atmosphere around him.

When I left Stuttgart, it seemed to be *set fair* with him—now I was sorry to observe it was *change*, and even promised to be *stormy*.

Yet I had never before felt so proud of him. Plain, insignificant men naturally are apt to overrate the advantages of handsome features and a fine, strong physical organization; but if John had not been my brother, I should have liked him at the first glance of his frank *English* face, broad shoulders, and straight athletic limbs, and have loved him afterwards for his hearty laugh and manly, easy voice. He was one of those independent-looking fine young fellows who bear the stamp of being born to a thousand a-year, which perhaps they don't get, but would use handsomely if

they did; and who, if they have nothing a - year, cannot help showing their generous free-hearted natures.

He was clever, too, or I should rather say sharp, constantly getting at a good deal of knowledge in an imperfect, impatient way, and making the utmost use of it. I was often amused and surprised to find how stray thoughts and expressions of my own were caught up by him, and made really brilliant and effective by his ready wit.

My rooms were on the second floor, accessible to the third by a spiral staircase of cast-iron, or by a long passage leading to the general stone stairs I have before mentioned. The paper on the walls was painted with views of Alpine scenery, in which the trees reached

to the ceiling; and the effect was very pleasant to a sedentary student like myself, especially in morning or evening twilight, when I seemed to be in Switzerland, without the trouble or expense of getting there. On the third floor were the Baroness's and the visitors' rooms, built in suites of three, leading one into the other, and opening on to the gallery which ran round the Schloss. From the windows of this gallery you could look down into the court-yard, and it would take some minutes to count all the irregular windows studding the pink walls. Below were stables and a prison, and Carl told me many a ghostly story of knights who had been kept there in feudal times, and were afterwards led out to be beheaded. My own

windows, which were small, and made deep embrasures by the thickness of the wall, overlooked the terraced garden and little fountain dripping pleasantly throughout the burning summer days. Owing to the deep shadows made by the walls, and to the fact of my rooms looking to the east, the light there was always pleasant and subdued, a light especially grateful to my eyes, now paying me with a vengeance for having been somewhat too hardly used in earlier life.

One evening, as I had finished a letter, and sat smoking my happiest cigar of all the day—for at such quiet times my heart would be filled with peace and happiness to think of the Providence that had guided my

brother's steps and my own to a life so wholesome and honest ; and I would follow out the future trustfully, allotting to him a safe and honourable life, aided by the love and energy of a woman so worthy to be loved and trusted as Otilie ; and to myself a sweet, sweet home, with a little wife, from whom I wanted love, and smiles, and sympathy, and nothing more.

My reverie this time was disturbed by Otilie, who had opened the door at the stair-head and asked gently,

“Henderson, are you there?—may I speak to you?”

I invited her at once to come down ; and, seating herself in the window-seat, with her face turned from me, she said nervously and quickly,

“Have you received any bad news from England—has anything happened to you?”

“Thank God, no. Why do you ask, Ottilie?”

“Because—because,” she replied, still with some nervousness, “I cannot otherwise explain the change which has come over John lately. He has seemed so unsettled—so restless—so unlike his former self; you know, Henderson, he used to be very happy with us, and contented with his employment. But yesterday he even told me he should throw it up, and try something else in one of the large commercial northern cities—”

I started up, surprised.

“He has never said anything of that kind to me.”

“I knew it would vex you, and I thought it right you should know what is going on in his mind, for I believe you can influence him when no one else can. I—that is, we should all grieve so much, if he made a false step—and there is no telling what he may do if he continue in this reckless mood. That is the worst thing in England, Henderson—young men want to grow rich at once, and cannot think it possible to be happy on a small, humble income. Who can be happier than papa, and he has only two hundred a-year!—yet out of this he allows something to my married sisters, and supports us all respectably—we want no more. I have read a great many English novels, and I

always see the same sort of thing in them; all the young men and women are striving for refinement and luxuries which we know nothing about. I like to see people energetic, and I think there is a great deal too much of the sleepy Michel about us Germans; but there is a difference between discontent and ambition; John will not content himself to work on in the path which lies open to him, but wants to choose a higher and an easier one."

"You are right, Ottilie."

"After all," she continued, "his prospects are not so very bad. If he went to Hamburg or Dantzic, ten chances to one if he could get a more remunerative situation than this to begin with. And it would be such a

pity!—oh! Henderson, there would be so much danger in his going away from us all. Here he has friends about him, who are interested in his well-being, and a home always open to him; but in a strange place he would have none of these good influences to balance any bad ones that might surround him.”

Just then we heard the voices of Carl and Sophie in the gallery above.

“The others are home from their walk,” she said; “I will join them. You won’t think me bold or interfering in what I have said to you, Cousin Henderson?”

“Dear Ottilie, no.”

“And you will persuade John from these unsettled ideas, and reason him

into a happier frame. Ah! you will be able to do it, you love him so dearly!"

She blushed deeply as she said this, and turned to the window. From where I sat, I could see two figures walking slowly among the orchard trees, but was unable to distinguish who they were. Ottilie stood for some minutes looking out, and then moved away.

"Let this be in confidence between us—do not breathe a word of our conversation to anyone," she said hastily.

I took both her hands, and looked into her quiet, clear eyes.

"You are a famous counsellor, Ottilie; and though John shall never know it from me, I am sure it would make him very happy if he knew that you

cared for his success. One day, perhaps——”

She broke away laughingly and flew up-stairs.

CHAPTER IX.

It was Sunday, and the last day of our visitors' stay. The morning was very rainy, and my uncle, though particularly attentive to his religious duties, not having his every-day coat with him, was obliged to forego the pleasure of hearing the Herr Pfarrer Popp preach, and to content himself with listening to my aunt instead. *Her* manner of religious reading was

peculiar, but no doubt highly edifying. She opened the Bible on her knees, and, with her knitting-needles as busy as possible, read a verse or two aloud, interspersing them with commentaries, by turns secular and scriptural.

This kind of edification having gone on for the space of half-an-hour, the kindly old couple walked backwards and forwards in the gallery, amusing themselves with peeping into the many odd corners and ante-rooms with which it abounded. On one side of the Schloss, and divided from the surrounding wilderness of flowers and fruit-trees by a gravel path, was a long roofed pavilion, or riding-house; and here the rest of us resorted, not minding a dash of rain which would wet us now and

then. After some time the sky cleared, and we distributed ourselves amid the Schloss grounds. I did not much notice the movements of the rest of the party, for Sophie was with me; but when she stole away, under the pretext of getting her hat, I sought my favourite seclusion, the pavilion on the hill, and endeavoured to console myself with a book.

But I had no sooner ascended the stairs, and seated myself comfortably at the door, where I could inhale the sweet refreshment that a summer rain leaves, than I heard voices below, which caused me to start up with a sudden panic.

“It is not much to ask,” said the first voice which was John’s; “I only

beg permission to speak—to speak for the first, last, only time. That you surely will not refuse me?”

“No,” replied the Baroness, firmly but sorrowfully, “I would not refuse you if I thought that my consent could make you happier, or in any way serve you—but it cannot. I must not listen—I must not speak, because whatever may be said by you or by me will be better unsaid.”

“It cannot be better for me,” broke in John passionately, “and it can do you no harm, since you are as far removed from me as if you lived in another sphere. To-morrow I shall leave you, and never see you again; what my life will be I should not dare to think, if I valued it a thought

more than I do; but as it is, I do not care how mean, or drudging, or base it may be. I shall go to labour as a cart-horse, that must work because it must live, and has no future. My past will be a better, more beautiful one than I ever dreamed it possible any part of my life could be, since I have known and loved you. But the future? What right has a poor clerk to a future, who loves a woman infinitely beyond him in character—in education—in station? I despise society—I hate it, when I think of the barriers it sets up between a poor man and the noblest, holiest ambition of which he is capable!”

“You are unjust,” said the Baroness, with an apparent effort to still the

trembling of her voice; "you are more than unjust, you are cruel. Where a true-hearted woman loves, there are no barriers of the world's setting up; and if it be your misfortune to love, do not impute it to the lowest motive, that love cannot be given you in return. Is there nothing else, think you, that can divide hearts but the paltry differences of money-made rank?"

"But," replied John bitterly, "if it were possible that you might one day love me—I do not admit of the possibility, except to prove to you that I am not unjust—would not these obstacles stand in the way of every hope I might otherwise cherish?"

"No, they would not stand in the way. I do not speak of myself, be-

cause it will be better and happier for you that I should not. I speak of any true woman; and I say that between her and the man she loved these obstacles would never exist."

"Heaven bless you for saying so!" said John, brokenly; "and pardon me—oh, I ask your pardon on my knees, that I have spoken thus to you! It was cowardly, unmanly, of me! But could you know all that is in my heart—all the deep reverence and respect that I feel for your presence, you would forgive me. As it is, you will only remember my violent reproaches and angry indignation at the self-made misery my folly has brought on me. If there is anything better and worthier in my nature you

will never know it—no one ever will, since I have no object to lead me on to better things. Could I hope to win your friendship—your esteem even—it might have been different; but as it is, I can never, never reach you!”

“You are unjust again,” said the Baroness; “can you not trust to my word?—whatever you do, speak to me as to a woman.”

“But speaking to you as a woman, and putting aside all other considerations, I could never reach you. You stand so far above me—your intellect and heart could never be content with the love of a nature so imperfect and faulty as mine. If we were not so unequal—why is it that my presence is indifferent to you—that whilst I speak, and my whole heart is

trembling on my lips, you are utterly unmoved? Why is it that I shall go and never be remembered by you, whilst my own life will be but one long memory of the last few days? Since I came here, not a word from your lips, not a tone of your voice, not an expression of your face, but has been impressed on my memory; because of my very imperfections can I love you so much the more passionately, since what is love, where a man and woman meet as equals, becomes worship when the woman has all the goodness, and beauty, and grace, and the man all the disadvantages of a character formed in such a school as mine has been. How much your love would exalt me—how much even the intercourse of your friendship would raise me—I will not think; for the one

is as far from me as heaven, and the other—were you disposed to give it me—would be dangerous from its sweetness, and in the end would make me even more unhappy than banishment from you ——”

“I entreat you to say no more!”

“We are parting—I have no chance of ever being happy again—no hope of ever hearing your voice, or looking upon your face—I who love you so madly. The best years of manhood are before me, which, to other men, have such joyful promise of home and wife, but which can only be but tolerable to me, and a dreary looking back to a few days’ happiness. Think of this—a hopeless life-time set against a few days’ happiness!”

“I do think of it—I am not heartless.

Would to God I could say something that you might take away as a kind remembrance of me!" said the Baroness, her sweet voice breaking down under her agitation—"believe me, it would make me happier and better, if I could respond to such affection as yours—I should feel less lonely if I could begin life over again, with such a love to strengthen and console me; but, oh! be kind, and understand what I would say, without the painfulness of hearing it said by me—for could I love you with the one fond, passionate love of a woman's life, there is between you and myself—between myself and any happiness love might give—a bar of separation, that the world never set up—a bar I cannot break!"

I heard a deep-drawn, shuddering sound

—then a low sob. Oh! my God, had it come to this?

“No—not tears—I cannot bear it!” continued the Baroness, in a voice of forced calm; “I shall never be happy again, if you leave me thus. I shall reproach myself for having added to your grief instead of lessening it, when I tried to speak to you as a friend.”

“I am parting from you—I love you!—oh! forgive me!”

“Forgive *me*, since it is I who have caused this misery; but if it will in any way soften your remembrance of me, think of me not as of one who has had so much happiness or so much love that she does not feel herself honoured—does not better esteem herself for the good gift of your honest love. Do not think that I shall

forget you because my life and heart are occupied with affections and joys only, or because I hold them so much higher than all that your love might have been to me, could I have accepted it."

Then John cried, vehemently, fiercely,

"For Heaven's sake, do not speak gently to me, or it will seem impossible that you are sending me from you for ever! That is the hardest of all—I can never have a kind word, or look, or smile from you, as others can—I who love you!—I who am parting from you."

"Then I must only say—go, and Heaven bless you!" answered the Baroness, with sweet patience.

"Not yet—do not say that yet. Grant me a few minutes more—it is the last time—the last time!"

“You must listen to me, then; and if I may seem to speak cruelly and heartlessly now, in after-years you will thank me for it. You are so young, and have so much that is pleasant and enjoyable before you, that it is impossible for you to remember me many years with the bitterness and despondency that you feel now. I too have suffered, and have overcome suffering—oh! be guided by me—try to be happy—try to make another happy. No one can tell the misery of looking back, through lonely years, to a happiness we once had, but can never have again.”

Her voice trembled and broke down.

“You, too, know what sorrow and loneliness are,” said John, sadly. “You can pity me, then—you can feel for me. Think of me as of one who would have loved

you with a love that was the religion of his life—who would have loved you so well that his love might almost have made him worthy of you. Will you remember me so ? ”

“ I will remember you as a friend—a true friend, whom it was my misfortune to lose early ; in any other way, I must not, ought not —— ”

“ Then let it be so ! ” answered John, impetuously. “ If you can think of me in any way that will not be painful to you, I shall go away with one thought in my heart that will, at least, give me comfort. But to be utterly lost in your memory—to feel that I shall never be connected with a single hour of your past life—that you will never pity me in my loneliness—this I could not bear ! ”

“ Let me think of you as being happy,” said the Baroness, very gently.

“ What have I to make me happy ? My prospects in life are miserable. Only one person in the world—my brother Henderson—loves me or cares what becomes of me ; and you, whom I love, I shall never, never see again. I have not the energy to shake off grief as some people can ; nor can I, like Hendy, sit down and philosophize it away. Oh ! I am utterly, contemptibly weak and miserable ! ”

He sobbed afresh, and then the Baroness’s voice dropped to its sweetest, lowest key.

“ Will you leave me so ? Will you leave me such a remembrance of you—a remembrance that must always be a bitter reproach ? Oh ! friend, I am lonely !—I cannot afford so much unhappiness to be added to my

life—never too happy. Be strong, that you may help me to strength. Be generous—I do not deserve generosity of you, but for your own sake I ask it, since the only service you can render the woman you love, is to accept her friendship.”

“I dare not take it. I cannot see you again; if I am to die, let it be quickly, and not by slow tortures. I had better go now.”

“Yes, you are right. You had better go.”

There was a silence of perhaps a minute—not more; yet what a long agony it was! I felt that my brother was looking for the last time on the face of the woman he loved. I felt how that look was burning her soul with its unspeakable, despairing

tenderness; how to him it was the last wrenching away of love, of hope, of joy; an eternity of feeling concentrated into a lesser space than would take the commonest friend's greeting!

The cold sweat rose to my forehead—I held my breath, and shuddered as I had not done since I witnessed the last unquiet moments of my father. What a pause of time it was! What an intolerable weight and oppression seemed to hang in the fresh summer air, in the gentle swaying to and fro of the wet leaves, in the slow movement of the white clouds. God! that one minute could hold so much sorrow!—that grief could make Nature so awful!

I drew in a deep breath of thankfulness

when I heard him walk quickly away from the pavilion, for I knew then that the struggle was over.

CHAPTER X.

AN hour before the usual dinner hour of two, John left the Schloss. It was not difficult for him to frame an excuse, as by reaching Stuttgart that night he would be in readiness to begin the week's work, whereas the journey occupied so many hours that if he waited till Monday the whole day must be lost. After having had a holiday, he said, he did not wish to encroach upon

Herr Schneider's good-nature; and my uncle and Otilie both warmly approved of his resolution.

Poor Otilie! I saw her look anxiously from him to me, as if to ask whether this sudden idea augured well or ill; still, at parting, she was quite composed, and gave him a frank, bright smile of encouragement—such a smile as any man might be proud to win from a woman. Indeed, one could almost have fancied Sophie to be the one most interested in him, for her colour heightened, her eyelids drooped over wet eyes, and her little dimpled hand shook in his as he said adieu.

“I shall walk with you to Marbach, John,” I said; “we don't often get a walk together now. You, I know,

Ottilie, will take care of Carl for me."

"It's a pity you should do that, Hendy—you will have to go before your dinner, and it's a good stretch to Marbach."

"A dinner more or less is of no consequence to me. Don't you remember the old times in Cambridge, when you used to have to remind me that such things were necessary?"

He said nothing, but buckled the strap round his valise with mechanical haste.

"Oh, Mr. John! Mr. John!" cried Carl, who had just rushed in—"you are not going without saying good-bye to mama?—what will she say?"

I tried to frame an answer, but John

said quickly, without the quiver of a muscle,

“I have already bid your mama good-bye, Carl.”

He turned round at the door with a nod and smile, and then we hastened out, Carl accompanying us to the gate; once, as we descended the old stone steps leading to the front entrance, I saw him look towards the pavilion; but there was that in his face that made me turn away my eyes with a feeling of sharp pain.

“When will you come again, Mr. John?” asked Carl, who idolized my brother, as all imaginative children are apt to idolize grown men, when they are handsome, ready-witted, and good-natured.

"We'll see, Carl—but I can't stop now. Good-bye, my boy."

"I know you can stop a minute, Mr. John—do come again soon, please. I like you, and I know mama does, because she always asked you to hold her gloves when she gathered flowers or fruit in the greenhouse. Wouldn't you like some flowers—mama always gives them to visitors when they go away."

"Another time—not now, Carl, thank you."

"Are you angry with me, Mr. John?" asked the boy, his large sensitive eyes filling with tears. I had never seen him look so like his mother: an expression of unspeakable tenderness and suffering passed over John's face.

"Why should you think so, Carl?"

I never dreamed of being angry with you—but I really am in haste, so good-bye again.”

He held out his hand; but Carl, who, in spite of his uncontrollable spirit, had a good deal of the woman in him, raised his cheek with an evident design to be kissed. John kissed him hastily, and then walked on without looking back.

We did not speak a word till we reached the summit of the hill where I had seen Hermine's carriage, on the first day of my arrival at Weiler, and from whence could be caught a glimpse of one grey old turret amid the trees. Then I spoke, for my brother's white, silent face was more than I could bear.

“John, I know your secret. Bear it bravely, old fellow.”

“No, Hendy,” he replied, stopping short, and looking me full in the face, with a hard, resolute expression; “if I have betrayed that mad folly to you, let the matter end so. Never speak to me of it — never recall the time by word or look; in everything else, as you know, there must always be perfect confidence between us, but in this, it is impossible. I know that what you wish to say would be kind, and wise, and considerate; but because I cannot listen to you, you will well understand how I feel about it. Therefore, Hendy, do not give us both cause for vexation by trying to say what I cannot, will not hear from anyone now. If I seem to

be harsh, or unkind, forgive me, and think that I do it only to prevent a quarrel, which might make us feel like enemies towards each other. Nothing that you could say would show me my folly clearer than I can see it now; and the cost of it—good as you are, and affectionate as you are—you cannot help me to pay. We had better part here. I want to be alone, and it can only vex you to see me as I am.”

“One moment, John—don’t look at me so. Good God!—do you think I am so much less than a man that I should wish to prate and preach my own wisdom to you when there is, as it were, a heaven and a hell between your heart and mine? And do you think I should call that a folly, John,

which has set you up in my love and esteem higher by a hundred-fold, which is the most solemn sorrow a man can have? Do you think I am so miserably mean-spirited that I can find no better acceptance in my own mind, for a thing, than such as the world would give it?"

"Don't heed what I say, Hendy, but shake hands and go. I could no more help hurting your feelings now than you can help hurting mine—generous as you are. Oh! let me be alone."

I gave him my hand. I had, however, something else to say—something I was determined he should hear.

"Nothing can ever divide our lives, John—remember that; the good or evil

that comes to you must come in part to me; and however we may appear to be distanced, my heart will always be as much yours as it is now."

He wrung my hand a second time, and, without speaking, hastened on.

Slowly and sadly I retraced my steps to the Schloss, for the first time realizing the full amount of my brother's sorrow, which was the only thing that had ever shut his heart against my sympathy. If this love for the Baroness was no mere sudden fancy, but a deep-rooted and steady passion, there was no calculating the misery of it—for John's nature was impulsive and impatient to the highest degree; and though I loved him so well, and could so easily forgive his faults, it was impossible for me not

to feel how soon he might be led on to great error as well as to great good.

I could not wonder that he loved such a woman, nor could I think for a moment that she was one to be half-loved and soon forgotten. Indeed, much as I valued John's happiness, and knowing, as I did, that it depended on the instability of his love, I felt then as if I must despise the man whose affection for her could be anything but the tenderness, and constancy, and passion of his whole life.

Yet the hopeless wearing pain of an unreturned affection—of a lonely, homeless life! Heaven defend John from that! Ah, could he but have loved Ottilie instead!

She met me at the entrance-gate,

having watched us both, she said, from her bedroom-window; but seeing that I was disturbed, she forbore to remark on my unexpected return, and chatted in a pleasant, cheerful way till we reached the courtyard. John had once said to me that Ottilie always threw a sunbeam over a thunder-cloud, and he was right; under the influence of her kindly voice and bright smile it was wonderful how my gloominess dispersed. Men are selfish in their sorrows. They must have others weep with them and groan with them—they are never silently heroic in the way that women can be. Afterwards, when I knew how Ottilie loved John—how bravely she bore all her own anxiety and unhappiness—how all the time that she was suffering in silence she was only

thoughtful for *him* — I often compared her conduct with my own, and came off with very little honour.

CHAPTER XI.

WE missed the Stuttgart party more than I had thought it possible for us to do, and for some days after their departure, Schloss Weiler was a dreary place. We still took our usual walks—neither the fine weather nor the lovely nooks were wanting for pic-nics—I grew stronger rather than weaker in my legendary power at twilight times—the Baroness read her favourite poems to us in the sweetest tones of her

sweet voice ; but something was still wanting which we did not speak of, though felt deeply.

Was the Baroness unhappy for thinking of John's unhappiness ? Had that passionate outpouring of first love made still clearer to her the loneliness and sadness of her own heart ? I know not. I only know that she seemed to cling closer to Carl after his departure, and was, if possible, even more tender, more watchful, more loving of him than she had hitherto been.

Carl was a strange child. Sometimes I felt that I could have readier undertaken the education of a schoolroom-full of ordinary boys than of this one ; and yet at others he was so strangely, inexpressibly dear to me—there would shine

such ardent, sensitive, pure impulses, even from his very excesses and faults—that, whilst they made the task of correction a very hard and difficult one, drew me to him with a bond of endearment I should have found it painful to break. Indeed, Sophie would have been already wooed, perhaps wed, if I could have come to the determination to leave Weiler; but till some plan suggested itself which might obviate the necessity of giving up Carl, I was unwilling to do so.

About a week after the Blums' departure, Hermine returned unexpectedly. We were sitting in the pavilion one day—Carl drawing by my side, the Baroness reading to us from one of the Suabish poets—when our sunny quietude

was disturbed by a sudden flash of silk and jewellery and merry laughter.

Though this young lady had a right to her own home, there was something in her manner of surprising us which I could not help regarding as an impertinence. She addressed us, and looked at us as much as to say—

“Are you quite sure I have not come upon you at an unwelcome time? Is there anything going on which you are trying to conceal from me—if so, I am determined to find it out.”

She sat down, however, very amicably amongst us, and said, with an amount of candour which, under the circumstances, was little less than affectation,

“My dear mama, I have something to tell you. I am going to be married.”

The Baroness took her daughter's white-gloved hands between her own trembling ones, and gazed into her face with searching tenderness.

Carl threw down his pencil, looked sharply at Hermine, as if to assure himself of her sincerity — finally exclaimed—

“You will never come back to live at Weiler then, and we shall have no more quarrels—I am glad you are going to be married, Hermine, because I hate quarrelling, and Mr. Brown says it is very wicked.”

Hermine coloured with vexation, but, quickly recovering herself, replied,

“Mr. Brown is very right; quarrels are very odious, and, except when they can prevent absurd and wrong things,

are utterly inexcusable. Still, on account of my marriage, you would not utterly drive me from Weiler—would you, Carl? After having so well imbibed Mr. Brown's axioms, I am sure you will be proof against all *my* efforts at disagreement."

I saw Carl flush under the sting. He merely gazed at her for a moment, however, with large, dilating eyes, and then resumed his drawing.

"Well," continued Hermine, after a short pause, "are these all the congratulations I am to have? Carl shows plainly enough that he is glad to get rid of me, and mama looks as sad as if I came here with the news of somebody's death. At Aunt Carline's there have been grand festivals in honour of the betrothal."

“The betrothal?—has it come to this?” asked the Baroness with pained surprise.

“Not exactly, dear mama—I should rather say in anticipation of the betrothal, for the cards are not printed yet, and the ceremony awaits your consent. But at Aunt Carline’s, and the Baron Liebenzell’s, in fact at all her friends, there have been parties made for me; and it seems very hard that only at my own home I should meet with so cool a reception.”

“Dear,” said the Baroness, “if you have chosen worthily—if you love your betrothed, and feel that you can trust your happiness to him, no one can rejoice at this news more than I.”

“Mama, how romantic you are!” cried

Hermine laughing ; “ it is you who ought to be in my place now ; I am sure you would make a better hand of falling in love than I ever shall. But, seriously speaking, mama, is there any very great occasion to fall in love at all ? Do you not think that people who take things in a cool, sleepy way get through life the happiest of any. If my father had lived he would, doubtless, have chosen somebody for me, and I should have married him without questioning the love and romance of the matter — as it is, I am able to choose for myself ; and rest assured I have not done so without duly considering what is necessary for my happiness.”

“ I hope you will be very happy,”

said the Baroness, drawing her daughter to her with motherly tenderness—such tenderness as she shewed to Carl.

Hermine looked moved—a gentle, I might almost say a beautiful, expression passed over her fair face, and she said, with real feeling,

“Mamachen, though you have not had your troublesome daughter to vex you, you are paler and thinner than when I was at home; your voice, too, trembles, which is always a sign with you of weakness or anxiety. Ah! Mamachen, you are not right in shutting yourself up in Weiler — how often must I tell you that before you will believe it? Nothing but the vineyards and flax-fields and dirty village to be seen day after day!—and such a solitude!—

such a silence! Mr. Brown, be honest and confess that Weiler is the dreariest, horriblemst spot in the world!"

"You must not set Mr. Brown against Weiler," exclaimed Carl, angrily; "he likes it, and why should you try to make him dislike it? If Mr. Brown goes away, I will never learn of another tutor—never!"

Hermine's eyes were raised to mine with a look in them that, had I been as fiery at thirty-seven as I was at twenty, I should have resented as a deadly insult. It was a look that plainly intimated a rising mistrust in me—a feeling of contempt, as if I were a coward, an interloper, a mis-user of my power, a toad-eater to the Baroness, because from her I received my salary.

But I had outlived the fieriness and haste of my youth; and being of a hopeful, contented temperament, could not take the trouble to be in a passion, unless where a passion could do me, or somebody dear to me, great service. I did not, however, forget that look of Hermine's. Long afterwards, when her eyes were kind, when her voice was soft to me, I remembered it.

"Let us hope that even if Mr. Brown does find Weiler monotonous, he will put up with it," interposed the Baroness pleasantly; "we cannot spare so good and kind a friend yet—can we, Carl?"

"Mama," cried Hermine impatiently, "do go with me to the house, and let me take off my bonnet and rest in your bed-room. I am almost killed

with the dust and heat of the drive!"

"You are not going back yet—you will surely spare me a few days?"

"Yes, mama, after my marriage, I will spare you a good many. But just now I must be at Munich, in order to prepare for it; and you know that to you such fusses are intolerable. It will be much better to get it over at Aunt Carline's—she really enjoys it. Nothing can equal her kindness and generosity about the matter; and, in spite of the little misunderstanding between you two—in which I believe she was all along well meaning—she always inquires for you affectionately, and would very much like to visit Weiler with me, in order to smooth down old grievances."

She said this with pointed clearness, as

if it were intended especially for me to hear, and so I believe it was.

“ Old grievances will never be smoothed down if your Aunt Carline comes here,” said the Baroness firmly.

“ Family quarrels are above all others the most detestable, and I cannot think how it is, mama, that with your peaceable disposition you can endure the thought of living at enmity with my father’s sister.”

“ We had better not speak of this subject, Hermine; you are here so seldom, that we can find pleasanter things to talk about. Come with me into the house, and let me have every particular of your engagement; it is natural that your mother should be as curious as a child about it.”

They left us, and I saw no more of Hermine till the evening, when a bright figure, in hyacinth-coloured silk, came spinning down my spiral stairs, and a very subdued voice asked my permission to enter. She appeared to have been weeping, but was perfectly self-possessed.

“Mr. Brown, I have come to you in great trouble. I do not know that you can help me, or that any one can, but, at any rate, you can hear me, and I cannot endure the thought of leaving my home misjudged by everybody. On your judgment I know I can rely, and I wish to show you how much I esteem it by this confidence. It is evident to you how unfortunately I am situated, with regard to the two

beings dearest to me on earth—my mother, and the friend who has been almost a mother to me. No one can be kinder, tenderer, and more forgiving than mama, to those she loves; but no one can be harder or more inveterate against a person from whom she fancies she has received an injury. Her unforgivingness amounts to absolute injustice. Aunt Carline deserves gratitude from mama rather than anything else, for, during the early childhood both of Carl and myself, nothing could equal her devotion to us. To her I owe my education and my introduction to society. If mama never loved her, how can she be expected to love mama? And that my mother never showed any affection towards her I am as certain of as that

she wants to wean even my love and gratitude from her now. What am I to do? My duties run in parallel lines, and will never meet. I cannot follow both. Mama exacts from me that I renounce Aunt Carline, the kindest, best friend of my youth; and when I am married, Aunt Carline can no longer continue to receive me at her house, if she be interdicted from mine. This would be intolerable to any one, much more so to a proud woman like my aunt."

She walked up and down the room in a state of quiet passion, with no tears in her eyes; only a tremulous colour on her cheeks, bearing witness to her inward agitation.

"Why our family should be so

wretched and divided, I cannot tell you now; but if I could, you would feel how hard it is for me to act rightly, how miserable to be the cause of such discord and bitterness. My heart does not tell me that I am much worse than other people, but I suppose I must be, since even my mother mistrusts me. And Carl's cruel, cruel words! I have been looking into his exercise-books this evening, and find that you have done the work of years during the last two months—was it so much more difficult, Mr. Brown, to teach him the common duty he owes his sister? But I have no right to reproach you, even if it were a matter of reproach. You do not know me—you are not interested in me—yet I had hoped that your

promise to me would not have been forgotten."

What right, indeed, had this haughty young girl to lecture me on my shortcomings, as evidenced in Carl's caprices? But her impertinence was so pretty and pathetic, that I was only admiring her when I might with justice have felt indignant. She went on with an assumption of experience and judgment which would have been comic, had she not appeared so thoroughly in earnest—

"But you will quite understand, Mr. Brown, that we do not want Carl to grow up a mere scholar or book-worm. He will most probably enter the army; and it is, therefore, necessary that he should be brought up to manly and active habits, and not be over-Anglicised in his politics

and principles—for you must know that we are half Austrians; it will never do, therefore, for Carl to run away from the family.”

I smiled.

“At present politics do not enter our courses of study, Fräulein; we have not had a great deal to do with principles yet.”

She smiled too, and without taking offence proceeded :

“I think I have nothing more to say—I will, therefore, bid you good-bye, Mr. Brown. It is improbable” (here her voice changed a little)—“it is improbable that I shall come any more to Schloss Weiler for years. What the future may bring I cannot tell, but it must bring a great change before my

mother's heart will open to me again. It is hard, it is cruel, that now, when I am about to enter a new home, the old one should be shut upon me, and that, in making fresh ties, earlier ones should be broken. Oh, mama! mama! will you never believe how much I love you! But I must go. Mr. Brown, you have listened to me very patiently twice, and if I can ever serve you, remember that I owe you an obligation I will gladly repay. I am Carl's sister, too, and though he does not love me, you will accept my esteem and gratitude for your extraordinary care and attention to him. I assure you that my disposition is not an ungrateful one, and if you can believe me when I say so, if you can think better of me than cir-

cumstances might at first lead you to do, I shall indeed value your regard. I am very unhappy. If ever mama speaks of me, tell her these were my last words to you. Heaven knows they are true ones. With the fairest prospects before me—with youth, and love, and health, and friends in my possession, I am very unhappy!”

My heart softened to her then. She was so much gentler and more earnest in her sorrow than in her vivacity—so much fairer as she drooped with meekness than she had ever looked when she stood erect and proud, that I felt an inward tenderness towards her—a yearning to comfort and help her. It seemed a sad and unnatural thing for this young, warm-hearted, lovely girl to be

unhappy amidst such promise of happiness.

“Oh, Fräulein Hermine, is it really so? Are you going away in tears and bitterness? Can I — can no one alter this?”

“No one can alter it now—but you are sorry for me; you sympathise with me; it is some comfort to know this—I am glad I have confided in you, Mr. Brown.”

She held out her hand to me—a soft white hand, with no tenderness in its velvety touch, though it seemed to burn my own as I pressed it. Then she turned to go, but I stopped her.

“One moment—you have spoken confidentially to me—you say that you rely on my judgment; then listen, for

it is my duty to speak to you what is in my heart. You are young, Fräulein — oh, you do not know, you cannot calculate, the amount of misery that this separation will bring to you in the future! If it is a grief to you now, when you are about to form a happy marriage, and have every pleasure and blessing of life around you, what will it be in a time when you have other trials to bear? Who can make up to a woman the want of a mother's love?—and such a mother, too! Loving, good, and tender as she is, it *must* be an unrighteous thing which divides you — an angel of God would not dare to come between affections so holy.”

Half by a gesture, half by a look, she implored me to desist. For a moment

her face was turned to me with its tearful blue eyes, and passionate, impulsive lips, speaking more in that silence of pride, and remorse, and deprecating appeal than any words could have done.

Then she left me. Oh! Sophie, Sophie, well was it that thy simple loveliness and sweet nature were havened so securely in my heart!

Hermine went early in the morning. It was my custom to rise at six, and get an hour's quiet study (for I was busily engaged in a critical work on the living German writers) before Carl took his fencing lesson in the pavilion. The signal for breakfast would be the appearance of Gustele, the dairy-maid, coming from the

farm, with fresh butter and rolls, at eight o'clock ; but to-day Carl did not come for his lesson, and, as I ate my first breakfast of fruit in the orchard alone, I saw the carriage drive away.

By-and-bye Carl came running to me, his large dark eyes alit, his loose locks shaken over his forehead, as they always were when he was angry or excited.

“Oh ! Mr. Brown,” he exclaimed in German, for he was too hurried to frame an English sentence—“Hermine is never coming back again, and mama is crying so ! Why should she cry ?—why should she love Hermine any longer, since she says such unkind things, and does not mind leaving us ? I won’t cry ; I never, never love anyone who is unjust to me, and I will not forgive her for making mama

unhappy. Mr. Brown, I wish Aunt Carline were dead ! ”

“ Carl, Carl ! ”

“ I know it is wicked, but I cannot help saying so, for mama will never be happy whilst she is alive. I heard her say so once, a long while ago, when I was quite a little child ; but I have never forgotten how she looked when she said it ; and whenever I think of it, I hate Aunt Carline, and wish she were dead. She loves me, and she loves Hermine—what can make her dislike mama ? ”

This advantageous, ambitious marriage furnished a clue to Hermine’s strange conduct. I could thus account for the mingled perversity, wavering, and regret that she had testified during her interview with me ; and when I thought of the subtle web of

influences cast around her by her mother's hater, it was easier for me to forgive her.

Yet she made us very miserable. The Baroness was sad, with a sadness that no sympathy or kindness could reach. She never reproached Hermine by word or look, but to those who knew her there was a small swollen vein apparent over the right temple, which testified to the amount of her suffering. In the acutest pain, mental or bodily, that small vein was its only indicator. Her nervous organization reminded you of a very delicate musical instrument, of which the strings snap easily, but cannot play out of tune. One could not but feel that sorrow was good which revealed the beautiful patience of a nature like hers.

CHAPTER XII.

“JOHN!”

“Hendy!”

I had been taking a cup of coffee and *anisbrods* with my good friend the Herr Pfarrer, and was just turning my steps homeward, when the Eilwagen drove into the village, and my brother alighted within a few yards of me. Though he looked spiritless and ill, only the sight of him seemed to lift a weight from my heart.

Since his departure he had only written one hurried note to me, with no reference to his unhappiness; and, in spite of being a small philosopher on most occasions, I could not satisfactorily console myself in this instance, but fancied all manner of miserable possibilities.

“We can’t talk here, Hendy,” were my brother’s first words. “Let us go into the Wirthshaus, where we can be by ourselves.”

In the court, or entrance, the post-boys were lolling about, drinking fresh cider with the greatest enjoyment, amid the noise of the geese and the odour of the cows stalled around. But the landlord informed us that there was an empty room upstairs, large, untenanted, and *recht nett*; so, following him, we were

ushered into a bare, beery, sour-krautish apartment, overlooking the yard on one side, and on the other a patch of orchard. Neither of these prospects was quiet. In the yard two women were gossiping, in the sleepy Suabian way, over the barbarous operation of goose-stuffing. Bah ! who could eat Strasburg pies after that ? They held the poor animals between their knees, and smoothed the corn down their throats as you would squeeze your clothes into a carpet-bag. When not another grain could, by any amount of cramming, be pushed into the crop, another victim was taken. The orchard view was pleasanter. Two or three sturdy lasses, with flaxen hair and mahogany cheeks, were flirting with a couple of youths over the process of cider or

most making. The work required little thought, and allowed ample opportunities for an occasional romp. They had only to keep a wooden vat replenished with apples, and mash them to pulp by means of a stone wheel, which two people could easily turn on the pivot. The juice of the apple thus obtained—unfermented, unprepared, unadulterated—forms the wholesome and cool beverage so loved by Wirtembergers.

John looked at the geese-stuffers—I at the most makers.

“How I shall rejoice to get out of this cheap, dirty, miserable country!” he said with disgust. “What a mistake it was on our part to come here!”

“I am not disappointed in it. If sour-krautish smells are superabundant, and

soap not so much thought of as it deserves to be, it has its advantages—it is a sociable, plentiful country; a country where a poor gentleman can live economically, and yet be thought as good as his neighbours.”

“ I thought so,” he said, gloomily. “ You like Germany; you will marry Sophie, and settle here—what else could I expect? If I were not the selfish brute I am, I should rejoice at it.”

I looked at him inquiringly.

“ I have thrown up my situation, Hendy. You will think me a fool—and so I am; but, with such love in my heart for *her*, had I been as wise as you, I should have acted precisely in the same way. Oh! Hendy, I could not return, day after day, to my drudging labour and feel

that I was really so near her, and yet as far divided as if I were dead. Once in another country, where by the remotest possibility we could never meet, I might work more cheerfully. I think I shall choose St. Petersburg, as there an Englishman has wider scope for his talents—and happy or not happy, Hendy, we must eat and drink.”

“What do they say to it in the Weimar Strasse?”

“Except Ottilie and Sophie, they are a mean-spirited, vulgar-minded set; and I will never again set foot in their doors. Only fancy, Hendy, the Colonel took me to task as if I were a boy, and lectured me on the necessity of young men applying themselves steadily to business, on the pernicious effects of idleness, and so

forth. My aunt (you know what a fuss she makes about her nerves) was nervous and worried—worried the poor girls, and Rösle, and me, till she finally came to the resolution that it would be far better for an unsettled young man like myself to take hotel quarters at once.”

“And Ottilie?”

“Can you believe it, Hendy? — they were so cruel, so shameful, as to keep the poor girl in her bedroom till I was gone. Not a word, not a look, from her did I get; if I had only seen her for one moment I could have come away with a lighter heart. Oh! Hendy, it is not the least of my troubles now, to think that I have given pain to that good, true-hearted, noble girl.”

“Does Ottilie love you?”

His face flushed at my question.

“Heaven forbid!—no, Hendy, I do not think it has gone so far. Before I saw *her* at the Ruin, the hope that I might one day win Ottilie’s love was very dear to me; but afterwards, when I felt that I could not give her the best affection of my heart, I behaved to her in the same friendly cousin-like way as I did to Sophie. Had it ended there I should have nothing to reproach myself with on her account. But after my return from Weiler I was so utterly, so hopelessly miserable, that it seemed to me, life would be unendurable at such a price. I thought if a bright, warm-hearted, sunny-tempered girl like Ottilie could love me, I should be set once more, as it were,

straight in the path of life, with the chance of being not more useless or unhappy than other people. But it was a selfish thing, Hendy, to seek Ottilie's love merely for my own happiness, and I did not deserve to obtain it. 'You do not love me, John,' she said, with tears in her eyes; 'if I tried I could not make you happy. Let us, however, always be friends, and you must look upon me as a sister, who takes the greatest interest in your well-being.' She was very kind and gentle—what a wife she would make, Hendy!—but I cannot forgive myself for having hurt her feelings and wounded her pride. And now, Hendy, you have the whole miserable story from beginning to end."

He smiled, a bitter, self-condemning

smile, and looked into my face for a reply.

“Well, John, and so St. Petersburg is the *optata arena* of your imagination now,” I said as cheerfully as I could, though the very name seemed to freeze my heart; “couldn’t you descend a little lower in your latitudes?”

“I don’t think any other place presents a better opening, and the life there would suit me far better than this torpid Germany. As to the cold, don’t you remember how I broke the ice for my baths all last winter?”

“I would not mind for myself,” I continued; “but for Sophie’s sake—”

He jumped up and fronted me.

“No, no, old boy. Sophie will make the one wife in all the world for you ;

and you will take pupils, and write learned works, and be as happy as ever man was. Stay here. Why should you sacrifice such prospects because you have a brother who happens to be a bad shilling? I will not accept the sacrifice from you, Hendy."

For some minutes I sat in deep thought. It was hard that my love and duty must be divided between the two beings on earth that I loved best. But it was so. Only in leaving Sophie could I discharge that sacred duty of love, guidance, and protection to my brother which I had promised at the death-bed of both parents.

"Be a good boy, Hendy," my poor mother had said to me, "and never forget that you are to take care of John."

“Hendy,” said my father, twenty years later, “John is many years younger than yourself, and handsome, proud, and fond of ease; on him the consequences of my fault will fall most heavily. Be a true friend to him. When he is in difficulties or in trouble, never let him feel that he is alone in the world.”

And Sophie, my fresh little flower, my newest, dearest joy, must I leave her so soon?

The contest lasted some minutes, but when it was over I clasped my brother's hand and said:—

“John, we will not part. What I said to you when you left Weiler, a few days ago, I say again now. Nothing can divide our lives. If Sophie loves me, she will love me, however much we may be sepa-

rated by time or distance—and only such love is worthy of mine.”

For a few seconds he held my hand in his, then he rose suddenly and walked to the window. We were both silent. When, a quarter of an hour after, we spoke again, neither of us recurred to the subject, but made our plans, with the tacit arrangement that we should leave Wirtemberg together. I wrote at once to the Baroness, asking her forgiveness for so abrupt a departure, excusing it by the shortest possible outline of what had occurred, and by my wish to save Carl the painfulness of leave-taking. Knowing as I did, the boy's impetuous nature, I felt that it would be better for him not to see me again, and I relied upon her kindness for the best construction of my actions.

Her delicate woman's tact would divine at once how much I should spare her own feelings by leaving without an interview. For myself, it would have been hard at any time to lose such a friend. I felt it doubly under the circumstances. After the letter was written and sent, we sat down to a miserable meal, having decided to walk to Marbach that night, in order to be in readiness for the next morning's post to start to Stuttgart. I should thus get half a day with the dear little family in the Weimar Strasse.

Heinrich brought the Baroness's answer—a kind, hurried, agitated note, thanking me for my care of Carl, wishing me every success and happiness, and hoping she should hear of my well-being through the Blums. She never mentioned John. The

amount of my salary was forwarded in a separate paper; and Heinrich informed me that he had orders to attend to my luggage as I might direct. I told him to forward them by the Eilwagen to Ludwigsburg, sent back a little gold pencil-case, which Carl had always admired, to be given to him next day with my love, shook hands with Heinrich, and then we set off.

It was such a summer evening as could only be described by the two words — Beauty and Repose. No descriptions so well suggest to you the melting jewellery of the sunset, the crimson flush over the pine-woods, the still brightness of the valleys. We were now in August, when

“ Lingerin Autumn stayed
Upon the threshold of the golden earth!”

—and we felt how solemn the perfection of Nature could be.

I was a good walker, but found it very difficult to keep up with John. There was something startling in the rapidity of his pace; it was as if his life depended on his speed, or as if he were fleeing from an enemy. When we reached a point where the grey old Schloss and wooded hill could no more be seen, he sat by the wayside to rest, heavy perspiration standing on his pale face, and damping his thick locks.

He pressed his hand on his temples, as if with sudden pain.

“Good God! John, you are not ill?”

“Oh! no, Hendy,” he said, starting up at once, and walking as rapidly as before — “never fear. Was I ever ill in my life? But you, with all your learning and

thought, will understand better than I can tell you, what such a passion can be to one like myself, who have hitherto thought it the easiest thing in the world to win a woman's love—who have lived, as it were, in myself, and felt every trifle a hardship which interfered with my notions of ease and comfort. Everything now seems to me mean and coarse in life; and which ever way I turn, I see only contemptible drudgery before me ! ”

I could have urged upon him the simple religious faith in an unerring Divine Guidance, which had so helped to make me energetic and contented since my childhood ; I could have preached a hundred and one sermons upon my favourite text of patient acceptance of events as they come—but for the present I forbore. There

are different kinds and degrees of sorrows. Some may be cured by a stinging caustic, others by the salve of sympathy alone, and I took John's to be of the latter kind.

“Do you love her so?” I asked softly.

His heart leaped into his face, his eyes moistened, his voice shook.

“Hendy,” he cried, passionately, “old friend, I have only you in the world to care for me now. Why did I not open my heart to you before, instead of sending you away, like a brute, as I was? But forgive me, old boy—only the devil in my nature spoke then; and whatever happens in the future, I will always stick to you through thick and thin, and will never forget how good——”

He broke off with a gasping sound in the throat, as if he were choking. Then he turned his despairing face to me and said,

“I must see her again! I cannot begin such a life without seeing her face first. Bear with me, Hendy, for I am very wretched—afterwards I will not speak of her, or vex you with my troubles any more—but, oh, Hendy, I love her—I love her so—and it is for the last time!”

What could I say—what could I do—with those burning eyes upon me? In vain I tried to urge upon him the misery of a second parting—the necessity, for *her* sake, of his own self-sacrifice—the unspeakable anguish he would thus recall upon himself. To all my

entreaties and remonstrances he repeated,

“For the last time, Hendy!—think of that.”

Slowly and sorrowfully we retraced our steps to the Schloss.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE Baroness was sitting in an alcove of the white drawing-room, which was her favourite apartment, on account of its lightness and airiness. She rose suddenly at our entrance as one who wakes from a dream. Her eyes glanced anxiously from John to myself—twice her lips moved, with an effort to speak—then she sat down again, with her trembling hands folded on her knees.

At last she said to me,

“For Carl’s sake you have come back—you will not leave us again—you are the only friend I have—will you be so cruel——”

Her voice broke down, tears streamed down her cheeks, and she covered her face with her hands.

“Oh! why did you not return alone?” she cried, with all the proud passion of her nature aroused; “it was wrong, cowardly, to surprise me thus! You who called yourself my friend, Mr. Brown, have I deserved this of you?—have I not sorrows enough without your adding to them? It was ungenerous of you to leave me—but that I could have forgiven.”

“The fault is mine. I know it was

unmanly, weak, mad of me!—I know that you will despise me for it,” said John, calmly and coldly; “but I could not enter upon the life which must be quite shut out from you, without seeing you again.”

“Why have you made me so miserable, and you say you love me? Could you not leave me the only friend in the world upon whom I rely? If you knew how solitary and troubled my life is, you would not have acted thus—Carl will never be happy if he goes, and I have only Carl to care for me now——”

“God knows, I would not willingly cause you unhappiness,” John interposed. “Hendy, stay here—you are my only friend too, but it is miserably selfish

of me to take you away from your tranquil life; and if by coming back I shall have been the means of making Carl happier, I shall better forgive myself. You must stay, Hendy."

He approached the Baroness, and said in a low voice,

"I am going away alone. Will you forgive me in spite of all the pain I have caused you? It is the last time I shall ever have the occasion to ask anything of you."

"No, no, no!" exclaimed the Baroness agitatedly; "I have no right to expect this sacrifice. Mr. Brown, leave me!—John, go! Be very happy. If I have anything to forgive, I forgive it."

With wild energy John cried,

"You love me!—I know you love

me!—why do you send me away? My love could make you happy.”

For a moment he stood close beside her; his breath was on her cheek; he touched her hand, but it was for a moment only. She moved a step farther back, and, turning very pale, said in a calm, sorrowful voice,

“You say your love could make me happy. Perhaps it could, if I were free to accept it, and had a heart that was young and fresh to respond to yours; but even if I had such a heart, there are obstacles which stand like open graves between you and me. Will it be any consolation to tell you again, that not only from your love, but from any other, I am almost shut out as if I were already dead. No one

else can have what you ask of me ; and however much I might love you, however much I might be loved by you, we must be parted !”

She covered her face with her hands and shuddered.

“I cannot forget,” she continued, “that Carl’s love was once taken from me. I am very lonely—often very unhappy, but I dare not think that the love and sympathy and protection of a husband might make my life as I have only imagined life could be.”

Again John drew a step nearer ; this time she did not move away, but let him hold her hands in his, and look into the depths of her eyes.

“Will you remember how I loved you?—will you think kindly of me when I am gone?”

A sudden beautiful flush tinted her cheeks—an unspeakable emotion shone in her eyes, and trembled around her lips.

Then I heard a voice, sweet and joyful as a linnet's first song after rain.

“Call me Marie,” it said; “since my childhood no one who loved me has called me so.”

I heard no more—I had no right to hear more, and hastened into the orchard, where I found Carl. He sprang to meet me with a volley of reproaches.

“I could not wear your pencil-case, Mr. Brown, though I admire it so much. I have been so angry, that I came to the resolution to dislike you

very much. If I had been bigger I would have challenged you to fight!"

We had a fencing lesson instead.

CHAPTER XIV.

I LOVE the autumn, that, “andante mélancolique et gracieux qui prépare admirablement le solemul adagio de l’hiver.” As I sit in my room, and let the drowsiness of the soft sky and fruity air steal over my senses, I feel that George Sand must be a poet to call it so, and willingly yield myself

to the drunkenness of such sweet music.

I never thought that Stuttgart would have seemed to me so bustling and lively a place as it does to-day; but after the quiet Schloss, this Weimar Strasse is like London. The street, indeed the whole town, swarms with people gaily dressed, and chatting in parties. Droskies, omnibuses, and rustic wooden carts, resembling corn ricks, roll past every minute, the clanging of the driver's whip and harness bells making a jingle as if an army of babies were rattling in concert. Farther off, one hears a military band playing in front of the palace, but the soldiers are not on duty, and hardly a *Jungfer* is without her blue-coated, boyish lover.

The town overflows with people ; and what a heterogeneous mass ! Bavarian peasantry, with their three-cornered hats, looking like shabby admirals ; old women of solemn appearance from the Black Forest, in black dresses, and velvet caps standing off their heads like crowns ; students from various universities, with little gilt caps stuck on one side of their conceited young craniums, and green leather bags slung from their shoulders ; Tyrolese pedlars, who might be noblemen, such fine, handsome, well-made fellows as they are, and dressed in such spick-and-span velvet jerkins, silver-broidered vests, and spotless stockings ; Swiss girls, who have come from the borders, looking very pretty and fanciful in their laced

bodices, starched chemisettes, and gilt chains. Then there are specimens of every class in Suabia; old officers of Napoleon's time, stiff and trim, befitting their dignity; country pastors, with their cherry-cheeked daughters, reminding you of the Miss Flamboroughs of immortal memory—and so on, till the *multipliciter* becomes wearisome to describe.

It would strike a newly - arrived stranger curiously, that all these crowds of people move in one direction—Cannstatt, the pretty miniature spa I have before mentioned; but he would soon learn that no less an event than the King of Würtemberg's birthday is being celebrated there, with a *Volk's Fest*, or People's Festival, which is certainly

(to German eyes) as grand a sight as the world can show.

I am re-established in my old room in the Weimar Strasse—the little, bare unadorned room, which I love for the sake of the garden it overlooks, and the pear-tree under which Sophie and Ottilie sit at work through the long afternoon. How could John call the Colonel and his wife mean-spirited and vulgar-minded? I can only forgive it under the circumstances. Nothing could equal their kind welcome to both of us when we called on them the day of our return from Weiler; and I saw that the good souls were quite anxious to atone for any injustice they had testified to John, who was so happy that I do not think the coolest reception

would have made any impression on him.

The Baroness and Carl are located in the family of the banker (by whom I was engaged in the first instance as tutor), residing in a distant part of the town; and thither I wend my way every morning at seven o'clock, to give my pupil his holiday lessons. For though the *Herbst Ferien*, or Michaelmas holiday, is not yet come, everyone keeps *Ferien* during the Volk's Fest. It was partly because Carl had never witnessed the latter national institution (if I may so call it), and partly because the Baroness had her yearly money-affairs to settle with Herr Roser, that we came to Stuttgart for a week.

The engagement was not kept secret from the Blums.

“I love you,” said the Baroness to John; “I think it no crime, no falling off in duty to my children, to marry a man whom I honour, and to whom I can look for support and protection and love, when they may both have left me. I know that in the eyes of some this step will lower me, as a traitor to the interest of my family—as a heartless mother, and as a frivolous woman; but I love you—I feel that I can give you the tender love of a wife, without breaking other ties; and feeling thus, I am ready to bear any censure, any hatred, any contempt even, for your sake.”

“Hendy, she is an angel!” John said to me. “Do, old boy, get married to the Sophiechen; for just now I feel so much

happier than you can be, that it seems quite an injustice."

And Ottilie. I could well understand why *she* fluttered from room to room, never settling quietly to her usual occupations—shunning an interview with me—shunning John's presence most of all. She was irritable, too, to Sophie—bore less patiently with her father's methodical fidgeting, and her mother's active nervousness—scolded Rösle sometimes a little more than the occasion required, and entered with apparent effort into the numerous plans for the forthcoming holiday.

"Then it is all settled!" said Sophie blithely; "this evening we go to the opera, to-morrow we drive in the park

to see the Court on their way to Cannstatt, and spend the afternoon in Hermann's garden; and on Saturday we go to Cannstatt again, to see the Races and the Fair."

We were sitting out in the garden—the Colonel, my aunt, Otilie, Sophie, and I, after our early dinner, and the conversation had naturally turned upon the Volk's Fest.

"There will be a great crowd in the theatre, girls, so mind and be ready quite by five, as we must be at the doors by half-past. Sophie will look quite magnificent in her blue and amber dress—Otilie, you have said nothing about yours?"

And the Colonel turned to Otilie inquiringly.

"She thinks her grey silk will do," answered his wife.

"The same she wore at the opera on the last birthday! Stuff and nonsense, what are you both thinking of? Otilie, why did you not speak to me about it?—damn it! I have a good mind not to let you go at all!"

He was really angry, and scolded away for several minutes, his wife and daughters listening meekly. When he had done, Otilie said, in a subdued voice,

"Dear *Väterchen*, if you do not think I shall look well enough, I will stay at home—I really would not mind it."

I think she would very much have preferred to stay, but dared not say so. The Colonel was still out of temper,

though he replied in a more modified tone,

“No, no, child, you shall not lose such a treat because you have been foolish. You have a white spencer?”

“Yes, papachen.”

“And a pink sash and shoulder-knots?”

“They are faded, I fear, papa.”

“Let me look at them.”

She ran in and brought out the ribbons, which were unmistakeably whitened by the sun; he looked at them carefully, then folded them in paper, and placed them in his pocket.

“I will go and get some new ones for you directly,” he said; “with them and your white bodice, no one will see if your skirt be new or not.”

She thanked him; and, taking up his hat he walked to the house. As he was entering, I saw Christine Hermann beckon to him with a letter in her hand, and the two paced up and down the Count's neglected garden, for upwards of a quarter of an hour, in earnest conversation. One of Christine's children ran out of the house and caught hold of her dress, but she repulsed it rudely, turning her handsome, troubled face towards us as she did so.

"Poor woman!" said Otilie, pityingly; "she seems to be in great perplexity and distress; why does she trust that mean, deceitful Count? I don't believe he will ever come back to her now—how can women be such fools?"

“If she had doubted him, she should have done so years ago,” interposed my aunt; “whatever he may be, she cannot free herself from him now—she has only had what reward every woman must expect, if she chooses to act as she has done. Count Cress is not worse than other men. But come, Sophiele, I think you and I must help Rösle to iron our petticoats.”

“That is always how mama and papa talk!” cried Otilie. “They are always lenient towards men—*their* unfaithfulness, *their* vanity, *their* selfishness, they have an excuse for; but women, who are the victims, get no pity, no justice even. It makes me angry to hear people passing judgment on such a woman as Christine Hermann. She is

blamed for trusting his promises—he is never blamed for deceiving her. Women are fools to love at all. Surely it is a virtue, and not a crime, to be faithful where they love——”

The angry flush died away from her cheeks—she burst into tears, and was silent.

“Dear Ottilie,” I said, gently, “I understand—I know all. Trust me, as an old friend, you will never find me unworthy your confidence, Ottilie.”

“If I could be proud enough to keep it all down—to forget everything—to feel to him as if nothing had happened. Oh! Henderson, I cannot do that, and it makes me miserable, ashamed of myself, ashamed of being a woman almost, to feel so weak!”

A tear, which she had too much pride to wipe away, stole down her cheek—she turned her head away, and continued—

“ I do not know whether I have to blame myself most or him. I should not like to be unjust to your brother, Henderson, for you are so good and kind to us, and we all respect you so much ; but I cannot help thinking it was wrong of him to show such tenderness towards me—to make me care for him at first, before”— her voice shook a little, “ before he saw *her*. If you knew how changeless and quiet our daily life had hitherto been, and how different it seemed when I returned from Tübingen and found *him* here, you would not wonder that I fell in

love with him. But let us talk of something else. The more I think of my own folly, the more impatient and angry I become. Oh! Henderson, I fear I have seemed very unamiable to-day; but I cannot help it, it is so wearisome to have to enter into plans for amusement and pleasure when your head is aching as mine is. Oh! how it aches, and I feel so cross and vexed with everything and everybody! If papa would only let me stay at home to-night!"

"Ask him. Let me ask him for you."

"No, Henderson, he would only be angry—he is very kind and good, but always expects implicit obedience from all of us, and it is right that he should have it."

The reader must not suppose from this that the Colonel was a domestic tyrant, far from it; but in Würtemberg the race of strong women have not yet appeared, and husbands and fathers have that supremacy in their households which our English ladies would rebel at with a phalanx of fiery pens. I forbear to offer any opinion on such a subject as the Rights of Women. I can only say, that whilst, perhaps, the Brownings and Mulochs bear the palm against the Natusius' and Wildermuths, it would be far easier to find unskilful housekeepers in England than in Germany—in the latter place the domestic duties being invariably set before everything else.

Ottolie and I had a long conversation

about many things, which was at last interrupted by my aunt calling out from an upper window that we must get ready. As we entered the house we were met by old Ricky, who replied to Otilie's salutation by the following strain, chanted in the broadest Suabish, and with an odd smirk on her mouth:

“ Jetzt geh i nach Stuttgart,
In d' Hofapotheke
Und kauf mir e Mittel
Dass d' Liebe vergeht.”

“ Must she taunt me with it? ” cried Otilie impatiently; “ am I always to be reminded of my folly? ”

Indoors no little excitement was prevailing, principally caused by the Colonel, who, looking very red and flurried, whispered that he had something extraordinary

to tell us. Having first ascertained that the landing was free from listeners, and cooled himself by unbuttoning his surtout, which gave way with a tremendous bang of relief, he began :

“What did I say, Ottilie—what did I say, wife, when Count Cress went away to be present at his father’s death-bed?—did I not say, ‘Ein anderes Städtchen—ein anderes Mädchen’?—and so I believe it is with him. I no more think now that he will fulfil his promises to the poor Christine, than I think that the cuckoo in my clock is a live one. Last week she had a letter from him, to say that he hoped to return soon to his splendid Christine, who must promise not to scold him too much; and to-day he writes word that he shall never come to

Stuttgart, and must see her this very night at Heilbronn."

"She will not go?" cried Ottilie, indignantly.

"Why not?" said the Colonel; "I advised her to do so by all means."

"I wonder she is not too proud," continued the girl still flushed and eager; "after his neglect and unfaithfulness, how can she humble herself so far?"

"Pride is all very well, Ottilie; but she is a clever woman, and does not wish to lose him. She is fond of him, too, poor thing! and it would be a shame indeed, if a lazy blockhead like that should slip from the fingers of one who knows so well how to manage him. Certainly she is a great deal too good and handsome for the fool; but so long as he is to her taste, that is

a very little matter. He has promised to marry her, and if I can anyhow help her to her prize, I will."

"And she is gone?" asked my aunt.

"Yes. Her sister will sleep in her part of the house till she returns; but she begged me to keep an eye upon the servants and the front-door at night. Now, Otilie, look at your sash. After listening to the poor Christine, I had to hasten to the König Strasse, and that is why I am so warm and out of breath now."

We took a hasty meal of apple-wine and bread, then proceeded to our dressing. With the Colonel, this was no joking matter; only on one occasion throughout the year—viz., the king's birthday, did he don his uniform; and as he increased visibly from one annual festival to the

other—but the uniform stood still—it is not to be wondered at that the ceremony became a yearly terror. When he was once in, as Rösle expressed it, he was comfortable enough—but the difficulty was to get him in; consequently, when the surt-out remained the last *pièce de resistance*, and the hardest one, I was called to render my assistance; and, with the help of the venerable Rickey, who grinned with immense enjoyment over the occupation—a puff, a gasp, a bang!—*en opus confectus*—and my uncle appeared in all the glory of scarlet-cloth and gold sash—both a little faded, perhaps, but none the less glorious for that. If he had been King Wilhelm himself, my aunt and the girls could not have been more proud of him. Then the carriage was announced, and,

after a great deal of squeezing and packing, they managed to get in, and drove off, amid the wonder and admiration of all the little Saxons and Grelingers assembled at the front door. Having no stars on my coat, and not being numbered with the *Adel* or noble of the land, I contented myself with walking to the theatre, and taking a *Sperr-sitz*, instead of ascending to the gallery, which was designed only for the above-mentioned class.

The pretty little theatre was crowded to an excess which would have made me at once relinquish any intention to remain, had I not discovered that it would be impossible to retreat. My seat had been taken several days before, but, after having sought the number fruitlessly for some minutes, I discovered that it was

filled by a burly citizen, whom I could not well turn out, as he assured me most politely that I must be mistaken, his seat and ticket having been compared by one of the officials. But the officials were too far off to help me, so, seeing a vacant seat, I plunged in desperately, Sophie smiling wickedly at me all the while.

I found myself in very good company, the *sperr-sitz* being occupied by the respectable class of tradesmen, professors, etc. It was new to me, but pleasant, too, to see young modest girls slip in unattended, and find their seats, without any affectation of coquetry, as it proved that, in some desirable instances, German ladies can even take the precedence of our strong-minded women. The dress-circle was now fast filling—indeed, hardly a box was empty,

save those belonging to the Royal Family. All the men wore uniforms, and their glittering stars and sashes were gorgeous enough in effect; whilst the ladies were gaily dressed, and had a jolly, ruddy look, as if plumpness and rosiness formed their *jus gentilitatis*.

“Who is that handsome girl with the Princess Friedrich?” whispered my right-hand neighbour to the old gentleman next to him; “she is quite a stranger to me.”

I do not know that I should have looked up so quickly and intently, had it not been for the reply.

“It is Baron Weiler’s daughter — the young lady who is to be married next week to Prince ——”

I lost the name.

If I had hitherto grudged any admiration I might feel inclined to give Hermine, she was so pretty and enchanting to-night, that involuntarily I gazed at her again and again — her expression was so soft, so grateful, so bewitching, that I forgot how often I had seen her in anger and caprice, and frankly owned to myself that she was beautiful. The Princess Friedrich was a good-humoured, matronly-looking woman, without any pomposity or pretensions to dignity whatever; but between her and Hermine sat a lady, whom no one could have passed unnoticed. I am not sure that the impression would, in all cases, be an agreeable one—I can hardly determine whether it was so with myself—but there was fascination about her—a strong fascination, too, which every one must feel,

and, in a measure, yield to, willing or not.

She was about forty-five, with small features, dark hair, and large lustrous eyes—eyes which had an unsatisfied, eager look, as though they were searching for something. The mouth was firm and smiling, her wit and understanding being represented in thin lips, and a pertinacious temper in a dimpled chin. She had evidently been pretty once; and her throat, which was fair and beautifully arched, was encircled by a small gold chain, from which hung a locket.

The entrance of the King, or rather the three deafening cheers which followed, distracted my attention for a few moments; when I looked again into the Princess Friedrich's box, two gentlemen were seated

there—one, a middle-aged man, whom I took to be her husband ; and the other, a younger man, who my neighbour informed me was Hermine's suitor. He sat between Hermine and the dark-haired lady, but his principal attentions seemed to be paid to the latter ; they were only those deferential marks of respect which a man naturally shows towards a woman some years older than himself, especially when she stands in the position of chaperon to his betrothed ; yet when the betrothed was so fair and winning, it seemed rather strange that love should be entirely overcome by politeness.

Hermine looked perfectly happy. Her eyes shone with bright triumph, her cheeks glowed, her brow was smooth—it was evident that, however much she had

felt at leaving Schloss Weiler, her heart was light enough now. When her lover picked up her glove, and held it towards her with a lazy inclination of the head, she smiled on him as if he had done her a knightly service; when the Princess spoke to her, she answered with a girlish, half-pleased, half-shy expression—and, indeed, throughout the evening I was constantly learning how gentle and placid Hermine could be when she was well pleased. Those melting looks, those sunny partings of her red lips, had never made her so enchanting at Weiler.

The piece was “Titus”—that gorgeous opera of Mozart’s, which brings before you, as if in a vision, the martial pomp and severe grandeur of the *fulgens capitolium* of ancient Rome. I have no finished

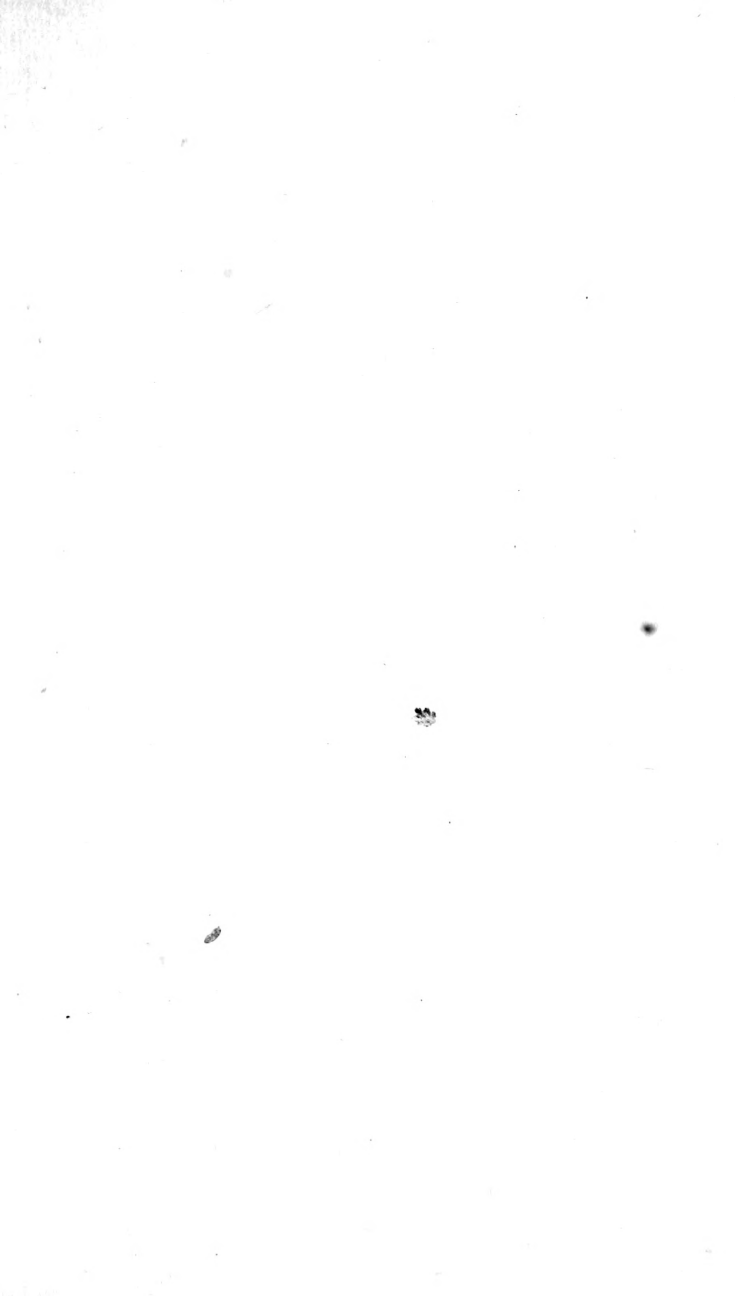
taste in music—I hardly know, indeed, whether I have any ear—but I enjoy it with a kind of blind instinct, which, perhaps, is pleasanter than the nicest epicurism, since I am never shocked by a false note, or put on the rack by a hurdy-gurdy. Even the Tyrolese stick-music is not amiss to me, and if there is a little grotesque dancing so much the better. But why do I expose my childishness to the reader—a short, stout, good-tempered, spectacled book-worm as I have represented myself to be, will hardly, I fear, find favour with the ladies—much less if I appear wanting in mental attainments. But, dear ladies, have patience with me. Perhaps, even yet, I may appear in the light of a small hero; and if my outer man is serio-comic, is it any fault of mine? In this melodrama

of life we must each take the part assigned us—to some the Cæsar, to some the clown ; but very often there is as much of the majesty of tragedy in the latter as in the former, spite of the cap and bells. Who can see their hearts? For my own part, I have never despised myself or any one else for whatever trivial or mean circumstances that might surround either. Whose place is it easiest to fill with dignity—the king's or the peasant's?

I have been led to make this reflection by the anticipation of what is now to follow in the narration of my brother's history as connected with my own.

END OF VOL. I.





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